1: Turnbull E-4. 3 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The past and the future pale into insignificance when compared with the moment. To understand this isolated, self-sufficient Pygmy world of the moment is also to understand something about the Mbuti relationship with the villager living in a very different, expansive, and uncertain world of change. 182

It seems worth mentioning the environmental factor also because the Pygmy himself takes it into consideration. His myth and mime, both important mediums of expression of the Mbuti, accentuate the opposition between the forest and the outside world, and between their peoples. They show a constant effort on the part of the Mbuti to effect a satisfactory relationship with the forest world that dominates their lives with such certainty and inevitability. It is not necessary to consider the environment further, but we must go this far in order to begin to understand the people whose society we are studying. 182 178 [538] 182

[p. 166-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS] 000

without religion. From the descriptions given by the few writers who mention the existence of "spirit houses" and "temples," it may well be that these in fact belonged to villagers. The style of construction described by Geil (1905), for instance, is certainly Bantu. None of these sources offers any acceptable evidence that the Mbuti used these spirit houses and temples. 776 346 191 114

Schebesta, from the outset of his first visit to the Ituri, was convinced that the Mbuti had a religious system. He finally concluded that it comprised the notion of a dynamic but personal divinity, that it was essentially the same among all Ituri Mbuti, but that it differed from the religious concepts of the neighboring villagers though it was influenced by them. Schebesta asserts that the belief in a personal God is based on the notion of vital force. God possesses the totality of this force and distributes part of it to worldly beings. Thus God is regarded not as a transcendent creator but rather as a person who lived long ago. He is sometimes confused with the first ancestor and may be represented by the moon. 771 776 [778]

The confusing abundance of names and terms used by the various Mbuti is partly due to the different languages spoken by both Mbuti and villagers, and partly to villager influence, but it in no way denotes any fundamental difference in this basic concept of a personal God accompanied by the belief in a vital force. 776 778 192 197 199

[P.188-D]

Ir Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

larly a child, who is said always to respect his patrilineal totem, respects his mother's totem when living with her group. A man also observes the totemic restrictions of his *karé*-brother. The totem is always taboo for the Mbuti. One may never eat it, and often not kill it, touch it, or even eat the food normally eaten by the totemic species. Breach of taboo is believed to involve serious illness or death.

The relationship of the Mbuti to their totem is one not of fear but rather of respect, which Schebesta says is evidenced by their addressing it as "father" or "grandfather," and by the belief that the totem animal gave birth to the first member of the lineal group observing that totem.

To this belief that the clan ancestor descended from the totem is allied the belief that on death the Mbuti is transformed into his totem. Schebesta finds it difficult to reconcile this with his analysis of Mbuti religion, and to see just which vital principle it is that becomes the totem. Connected with this difficulty is the all-important belief in *megbe*, the vital force emanating from the totem and immanent, but in different degrees, in all human beings.

Schebesta cites no individual or sex totems. As he sees it, totemism follows strictly lineage lines.

Magic

Schebesta finds the link between the religious

1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1985 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[p.192-c]

notions and practices of the archers and their totemism in their belief in *megbe*, the vital force dispensed, in part, by the divinity. It is one of the life principles, distinct from that which becomes a star or a sprite after death. *Megbe* is transformed anew into the totem when the body dies. The divinity possesses it in totality; astral beings are endowed with far more *megbe* than mortals; hence, their greater power and strength which derive from *megbe*. Mortals, then, have to reinforce their store of this vital force to give themselves additional strength and power. There are certain practices by which this may be achieved, notably by the use of bells hung about different parts of the body. When a man dies, his son may put his lips to those of his father to capture the *megbe* as it passes from his body.

By increasing his store of *megbe* the Mbuti can place himself on the same level as supernatural beings with whom he must have dealings. Schebesta cites legends showing how the Mbuti managed to steal fire from Ituré by the use of bells to increase their *megbe*.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

Various rites and magical instruments are logically consistent with this notion: the *segbe* pipes that are able to deflect the storm, attract game, or defeat the enemy; the magic horn of the *maigwa* antelope that seeks out thieves; and the various charms and amulets used by hunters either on their bodies or on their weapons. Certain animals are reputed to possess an abundance of *megbe*, notably crows, crabs, the snake (*magedo*), the antelope (*maigwa*), the chameleon, the toad, and the tortoise.

According to various legends, menstrual blood is also possessed of magical force.

Opposed to *megbe* is *uda*, the force of black magic. As mentioned above, the archer accepts death as inevitable, the recalling by God of *boru e'i*, the life principle Schebesta translates as "soul." But death may be caused by sorcerers through the use of *uda*. *Uda* is associated with menstrual blood, and Schebesta compares this notion with the legends that explain one cause of death as being the curiosity or greed of woman. This second cause of death, through *uda*, is thus attributed to the "original sin" of woman, who from curiosity or greed violated God's laws or lured man to do so.

Costermans (1938) and Boelaert (1936a) both criticize Schebesta on this point, saying that the material does not justify his conclu-

[P. 192-D]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1961-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

religious association (*molimo*) and of the women's religious association (*elima*); songs of the men's main economic activity (hunting) and of the women's (gathering). It is perhaps not quite justifiable to make the subdivision according to sex, as, in hunting and gathering among the net hunters, both sexes hunt. Most of the gathering songs concern honey gathering which is primarily a male occupation. Nor, in fact, does the classification into sacred and secular stand up to full scrutiny, as, in a sense, all songs are sacred as all are related to forest activities and the forest itself is sacred (pp. 258–259).

Unlike the archers, the net-hunting Mbuti make extremely little use of musical instruments of any kind, except for the resonant sticks used in accompaniment to their forest songs. For one thing, a truly nomadic group with only the most basic means of locomotion and transport, namely, the human body, can hardly afford to accumulate possessions beyond the absolute necessities—even less so with bulky nets as an additional item to be carried when camp is moved. Some net hunters know how to make and play notched end-blown flutes, with even greater skill and precision than the neighboring villagers, but they are rarely made. A *ikembi* (*sanza*) is the only instrument

[P. 234 - D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

Kalisia, if displeased with the Mbuti, will close the forest to them, until they make the propitiatory sacrifice *sulia*. The Mbuti are expected to make offerings to Kalisia from their food-gathering and hunting expeditions, and Schebesta (1952, 304) mentions a shrine for this purpose (*ende kela*). The hunters may less ceremoniously throw offerings of food into the forest. Schebesta says that no Mbuti in his right mind would fail to make these propitiatory sacrifices: *"à ce que m'a raconté un Nègre Biru"* (Schebesta, 1952, 304). Unfortunately, Schebesta does not always identify his source of information. However, from a number of admissions such as that noted above, we must assume that his informants were frequently villagers, not Pygmies, and that he also relied on the question-and-answer technique among both villagers and Mbuti (Schebesta, 1933, 171).

Both Schebesta and Putnam agree that the forest God of the net hunters is feared by the villagers, who regard him in no way as benevolent, in contrast to the Mbuti.

Schebesta also mentions the celestial divinity Songe (the moon), with its own remote world, as the sky God of the archers; also Keti, a bush

[P. 236-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

338). The Mbuti associate the storms with water, rain, thunder, lightning, rainbows, and snakes, and possibly fire. The net hunters have a particular fear of water and, as do the local villagers, seem to believe in water spirits, or, as they call them, "water animals." These are most frequently associated with death. A water animal is connected with the rainbow, perhaps the most dreaded of all natural phenomena.

As might be expected therefore, such ritual as exists is most often connected with the storm and its symbols. Putnam, who knew of Schebesta's account of ritual among the archers, did not disagree with it in so far as cult practices were described among the net hunters. However, cult practices are far less common, and he mentions no spirit huts or shrines such as were described by Schebesta (1950, 77). Food offerings may be thrown into the undergrowth, though specific information is lacking. I have met net hunters who stoutly deny that they would waste food in this way; certainly I never saw any offerings being made. But Putnam disagrees strongly that prayer or invocation is involved. The net hunters, he says (in unpublished works), do not invoke the storm god or

[p.237-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

To
Z 182 881 776 778 [825] [532 [535] the villager the masked dancers described in the account of the 1954 *nkumbi* (Turnbull, 1957, 193) represent the *ngosa* bird, indicating the presence of a benevolent spirit. Similarly, the bullroarer represents supernatural power. The various taboos applied to the *ganza* express village subordination to that power which is sufficiently strong to prevent the villagers from staying in the camp over night even though it meant allowing an already unruly *ganza* further scope for getting out of control. The *nkumbi* places the villager initiates in a definite relationship to the supernatural. It is closely connected with tribal lore and the ancestor cult.

Z [769]

P 177 881 776 778 829 The Pygmies have no tribal lore and no ancestor cult. To them the masked dancers were the villagers, André and Sabani, and the bullroarer was a piece of wood whirled around on the end of a length of twine. The "*ngosa* bird" and the "voice of the spirit," for the Mbuti, were neither "real" nor did they represent any reality. They were empty and rather ineffective theatrical devices, an opinion evidenced both by conversation among the ganza at night and in their constant burlesque.

[P. 254-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 254-C]

conversation among the *ganza* at night and in their constant burlesque.

Schebesta (1948, 508–510) says that, for the archers, the *toré* association has both social and religious functions and that membership is common to both villagers and Pygmies through the *nkumbi* initiation. Among the net hunters the term *molimo* is used instead of the term *toré*, and among the Bira villagers the word has apparently similar usage. Thus the *molimo* horn is an instrument that is sacred to both villagers and Mbuti. The villager *molimo* normally makes itself heard during the *nkumbi*, when the young initiates are introduced to it for the first time. It made no appearance at all during the all-Pygmy 1954 *nkumbi*. Evidently it was unable to appear as there were no villager boys among the *ganza*, and the villager *molimo* has a distinct totemic aspect that excludes the Mbuti. Yet for the Mbuti, in particular, the instrument is associated with their most profound magico-religious concepts, and it is inconceivable that they should regard the *nkumbi* as initiation into their own religious society without the inclusion of their version of the *molimo* horn.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social function at the moment because of insufficient information.) It fulfills its purpose through song and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The association may meet informally any evening as the men sit around the main campfire. They may sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but the horn will not be heard. Women and children are not excluded from the group, though, as is their normal habit, they usually keep to their own individual firesides. The association meets formally following any crisis such as death, serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting. Women and children are then rigidly excluded, and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occasions compel the attendance of all members. Adult members of the hunting band who are away come back; adult male visitors to the camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and practice among the net hunters, nor, according to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.

[P. 256-D]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

796 If this is magic, it is totally different from the
776 kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for
778 which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skeptical amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very
782 different attitude to the forest from that of the
575 villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*,
829 from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must ful-
533 fill the conditions listed above in order to make
539 itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings.
562 Women and children are presumably excluded,
858 because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the molimo among net hunters, at least.

[D 257-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 257-C]

physical disposition they are emphasizing their unity. Their means of communication are special songs, as mentioned in the survey, sacred to the *molimo*. These songs are not phrased in terms of explicit supplication. They merely call on the God of the Forest by constant repetition of his name (frequently changing from one name to another, it seems for the sake of variety and euphony), and an occasional recitation of his qualities as the source of all good in the Mbuti life is given. This song is echoed by the *molimo* horn, which is far off in the forest, though it may, in the course of the meeting, visit the camp. The song is picked up by the lone performer who follows it, singing it into the horn, passing it on still farther into the forest, finally letting it die away into the distance.

In this way the Mbuti make sure that their song is heard. Sung in this way, the song itself rouses their God from an apparent state of sleep or detachment, bringing him to a consciousness of the plight of his children. This, for the Mbuti, is sufficient. There is no attempt to ask for favors. The God of the Forest is the source of all that is good and bad, so that, as long as he is conscious of what is happening, the Mbuti are content. But they say that sometimes he sleeps, and when he is asleep things come to pass that might have been prevented had he been awake. The *molimo* makes sure he is awake.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women are members, and participation is compulsory in one's own camp or when visiting another. Communication with the forest God is again established by means of songs, special and sacred to the *elima*. However, the men take part. The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty, marriage, and death. Thus at birth and death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned. (As mentioned, however, the occasion of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.) Both associations meet in the forest camp but out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring huts. Young children may be present. The exception, when the men take part in the meeting of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

[P 257-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The function of these associations is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti.

1. [Molimo and Elima associations --Analyst]

[p. 258-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 259-A]

any major crisis affecting the community as a whole. But, as well as these religious activities, both major economic activities, hunting and gathering, are also consecrated by special types of song. It is inconceivable that the Mbuti, who accompany every important event in their lives with song, should not consecrate the initiation of their boys in this same way. But for the *nkumòi* they have no music at all. As we have said, in 1954 the *molimo* horn was not heard, and no *molimo* songs were sung. I suggest that other initiations, in which the horn and songs are heard, are in connection with villager institutions to which the village boys are being initiated. The only conclusion we can draw is that for the Mbuti the *nkumòi* is not sufficiently significant in their forest life to merit consecration by forest song.

This is closely paralleled by the absence of forest music (songs of the *molimo* and *elima*, hunting-and-gathering songs) when the Mbuti are camped on the edge of a village. When they do, the Mbuti themselves behave as different people. In the forest they feel and observe a certain restraint. Their songs are related to and emphasize their supreme value—the forest. Their daily activities are dominated by the forest and the hunt and the need for close cooperation.

1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 272-A]

538 Mbuti on the food quest, their lack of interest
171 in the past, with a corresponding lack of inter-
181 est in lineage or tribal ancestry, and an opposi-
tion typical of forest people between the animal
and the human worlds, more significant differ-
[176] ences appear in the legends. One such difference
is, of course, the way the Mbuti tend to class
the villagers with the animals, in association
with the spiritual world, the world of trickery,
• [178] in opposition to the human world. Then there
is the contrast between the Pygmy attitude to
the forest as the provider of all that is good as
well as bad, and the attitude of the villagers
who regard the forest as a place to be feared,
the abode of evil. This contrast is heightened by
the different magical and religious approaches
538 of the two people. The legends tend to confirm
182 the validity of my suggestion that the prime
771 function of the Mbuti magico-religious system
171 is to maintain normality in the relationship be-
tween the people and the forest. The villagers
seem more concerned with disorders and ab-
normalities and appear to have no such use of
song as that I have described for the Mbuti,
making greater use of witchcraft and sorcery.

538 To understand the meaning fully in each type
121 of legend, we need to know who told it, to
whom, with what accompanying mime, to what
effect, and under what circumstances. Given
such surrounding details, we could use legends
and allied arts to analyze that extremely diffi-

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

[P 272-87]

cult subject of sociological study, the magico-religious system. In the absence of such details we can do only as we have done above and indicate some of the general tendencies in the legends, where emphasis is given and where it is lacking, without being able to attempt any formal systematization. Even so, from this collection of legends there seems to be ample justification for supposing that the rejection of villager values which we saw in the *nkumbi* is real and not a mere psychological reaction. It is in fact an integral theme running through the legends. If the opposition is such as we suppose, it accounts for the lack of responsibility manifest by the Mbuti toward their villager hosts at all points where the two people come into contact.

The legends further emphasize the sanctity of the forest. This emphasis is one of the main ways in which the Pygmy maintains his distinctness from the villager. But the importance of the forest is not confined to the Mbuti-villager relationship. It is the central theme of the Mbuti magico-religious system, a glimmering of which we get in the legends relating to the supernatural, a system that is evidently quite distinct from that of the villagers, despite the common usage of certain names and practices. At this point perhaps, the two people are farthest apart.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

no villager boys present. But even more obvious, and ever manifesting itself, is the difference between the two people in their attitude to the forest. In the legends as told by the Mbuti we see something of the Mbuti attitude to the forest as the provider of all that is good and bad, as the source of the essentially good life of the Mbuti people. The forest is a place to be trusted (witness the *molimo* invocation to the God of the Forest) and loved. The villagers, on the other hand, fear the forest and people it with malevolent spirits. In their fear of the forest, there is necessarily an element of fear of the Mbuti, whom they recognize as its original inhabitants, as forest people. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Possoz (1954, 257) claims that the term "*Batwa*," derived from "*Batoa*," was originally applied by the Bantu-speaking tribes to the Pygmies, denoting that the latter were of older stock, closer to the ancestors and so worthy of veneration. The more recent term "*Batswa*," however, means "those in the course of disappearing." It would be difficult to prove or disprove such etymological deductions, but there is other evidence that the villager inhabitants of the Ituri Forest do not entirely lack respect for the Mbuti. There

[p. 274-D]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

pure hunting and gathering economy at work not only side by side with, but in opposition to, a cultivation economy. With the pygmoid Twa and Tswa, and possibly only excepting a few small groups in the Gabon and among the Ubangi Binga pygmies, the rest of the population of pygmy hunters and gatherers has become largely dependent for food upon cultivation, either by adopting it themselves or by entering into symbiosis with neighboring village farmers. The Mbuti solution to the contact situation is very different, and so it is in its contemporary context that we study it; any light the study may throw on an earlier form of pygmy society is incidental.

The habitat of the Mbuti is the Ituri Forest. This is a primary rain forest that runs across the equator from the fringes of the Saharan desert, in the north, into the Kivu mountains, in the south. To the east it is bounded clearly by a succession of lakes (Lake Albert, Lake Edward and Lake Kivu) but to the west the boundary is less definable, the forest thinning out as it approaches the Congo River's commercial centers. Effectively, the Mbuti occupy only the dense forest where the migration of game and the nature of vegetation have alike been virtually unaffected by outside influences. Their forest home, some 50,000 square miles in extent, is traversed by a number of roads built, for the most part, since the 1930's, but the purpose of the roads has been merely for transport and has not led to any significant exploitation of the forest, which in most places comes right to the very edge of the roadway (see Map 4).[1]

There are a number of significant features concerning the forest that have to be taken into account. In general it is considered as generous and friendly from the point of view of the Mbuti hunters and gatherers, and as niggardly and hostile from the point of view of the villager cultivators.

For example, the forest is, in most places, gently undulating, though even the mountainous sections in the east and in the south are as thickly wooded at their highest points as at the lowest. In all the territory to the north of the Kivu mountains the average height above sea level is somewhere around a thousand meters. This height, together with the over-all denseness of the forest, and an almost daily rainfall that averages from 70 to 80 inches per year, makes the temperatures within the forest remain remarkably constant and agreeable, seldom departing far from either side of 80° F., never below 70° or above 90°. The relative humidity is fairly constant at 95 per cent.

[1] [see page 319 -- Analysis]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1966) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

132 Where in the villages, and in the plantations that surround them, the midday temperatures soar well into the nineties, and the ground is covered with a dry, choking dust that quickly turns to mud, in the shade of the forest the world is cool and fresh, with only rare places, such as along river banks or at salt licks, where sunlight reaches the
136 ground without first being filtered through a leafy roof. Also from the point of view of comfort, and of health, where village conditions lead to gatherings of flies and mosquitoes, these disease bearers are seldom if ever seen in the depths of the forest, except at such sites as are
[186] easily avoided. The Mbuti frequently compare their lot, in these respects, with that of the villagers, who in turn grudgingly admit to some advantages of forest life.

312 Another important contrast between forest and village life is in the water supply. The forest is interlaced with innumerable streams, any of which can be drunk from with impunity. A hunting camp is always located near a stream, but never stays in the one vicinity long enough to foul the water. A village remains in the same location, however, for three years or so, and the local water supply invariably becomes polluted. The villagers have some resistance to infection, but the Mbuti often have none and quickly become sick if they stay too long in a village.

136 But it is with regard to food even more than shelter or water that
262 the forest seems to favor the Mbuti. Throughout the year, without fail, there is an abundant supply of game and of vegetable foods. There are half a dozen different kinds of antelope that are particularly abundant, apart from supplementary sources of meat such as birds,
[137] monkeys, chimpanzees, and divers grubs and insects. The forest also supplies a number of edible roots, notably the sweet *itaba*, and many different varieties of mushrooms, nuts, berries and fruits. All the latter may vary in abundance the one from the other, according to the time of year, but throughout the year at any one time there will be an ample supply, in both quantity and variety.

262 The only truly seasonal food in the forest economy of the Mbuti is honey, and it is of major importance in the diet. It is also of major
[621] importance as a focal point in the constant process of fission and fusion that characterizes Mbuti society.

• 778 The apparent benevolence of the forest towards the Mbuti extends still further. The materials for the making of shelter, clothing, and all other necessary items of material culture are all to hand at a mo-
[313] ment's notice. Firewood, equally, is everywhere in abundance. It is

2:Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

not surprising, then, that the Mbuti recognize their dependence upon the forest and refer to it as "Father" or "Mother" (I have heard both used, it seems without discrimination) because, as they say, it gives them food, warmth, shelter and clothing, just like their parents. What is, perhaps, surprising is that the Mbuti add that the forest also, like their parents, gives them affection.

If it has been thought that this stress on the environmental factor is overweighted, the last observation should make it clear why. The forest is more than mere environment to the Mbuti. It is a living, conscious thing, both natural and supernatural, something that has to be depended upon, respected, trusted, obeyed and loved. The love demanded of the Mbuti is no romanticism, and perhaps it might be better included under "respect," but I make the distinction here because the Mbuti make the distinction, and because it is all part of the structural relationship of opposition between the Mbuti and the villagers.

More of the intimacy of the relationship between the Mbuti and the forest will emerge as we proceed; indeed there is not a single aspect of their lives where it is not evident. Here let us take a quick look at the relationship of the neighboring villagers to the same forest.

In the Ituri the tribal composition is thoroughly confused, a succession of invasions from different directions having taken place over the past four hundred years. From the north came the Mangbetu, pursued later and driven westward by the Zande. At the present day these two large tribes stretch right across the northern edges of the forest, a large proportion of each remaining in relatively open savannah. Also in the north and in the east are the populous Budo and the Mamvu-Lesé. From the southeast came the Bira, a Bantu-speaking plains people who split on reaching the forest, some pressing up by Lake Albert and retaining something of their cattle culture[1], the others turning westward through the middle of the forest, segmenting into a number of isolated villages loosely held together by the principle of patrilineal descent and recognition of a common ancestor manifest in the chiefs and sub-chiefs. In recent years, apparently since the imposition of Belgian authority, the Forest Bira (the Plains Bira do not concern us here, directly) divided into two main chieftainships, with territorial headquarters at Koki and Bahaha. (Map 5 illustrates

[1] There is some uncertainty as to whether the Bira were originally cultivators or pastoralists. Among the present Plains Bira, however, cattle plays an important role and the people themselves claim to have always had cattle. They now practice a mixed economy.

2: Turnbull B-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

The villagers, like the Mbuti, find themselves in a very personal relationship with the forest, but a very different one. The forest surrounds them on all sides, but they do not live in it or by it, only despite it. Their initial act is one of destruction, the cutting down of the forest to make way for village and plantation which in turn are destroyed in the final act. The hostility is mutual, as the villagers see it. They have to fight not only the forest itself, but also the creatures that live in it. Elephants, leopards, baboons and Mbuti, all are a menace to life and livelihood. A whole plantation can be destroyed in a few hours by even a modest sprinkling of elephants. The excessive and sometimes erratic rainfall can cause hunger for a whole season. Baboons and Mbuti come in the night and steal the ripening fruit. Leopards prey on the few scrawny goats and chickens the villagers manage to raise.

As for the Mbuti, so for the villagers is the forest an entity to be reckoned with, upon which life and death depend; it is also an entity that is natural and supernatural. But instead of acceding to the natural, the villagers with their superior technology combat it; and instead of respecting the supernatural in the sense that the Mbuti respect it, the villagers oppose it with fear, mistrust and occasional hate. They people the forest with evil spirits, and they fill their lives with magic, witchcraft and a belief in sorcery.

The forest achieves the establishment of two virtually irreconcilable systems of values. It further determines, for both Mbuti and villagers, a certain degree of nomadism, and it tends to fragment large populations into small, relatively isolated bands or villages. For the Mbuti the forest merely indicates natural boundaries, such as valleys, ridges, rivers, caves and so forth, within which a band can conveniently roam at will throughout the years, economically self-sufficient. Within that nomadic framework there is an enormous sense of permanence and of territory. But for the villagers the forest announces, at the end of every three years or so, that the village must pack up and move, it does not much matter where. The move will inevitably bring the village into renewed conflict with the forest, and may well bring it into conflict with a neighboring village which has also been forced to move. In spite of the vast size of the forest and its small population, the villagers are unwilling to go off entirely on their own. At the present time they move up and down the long road that connects Stanleyville with Irumu, or Wamba with Nia-Nia and Mambasa. Formerly it seems that villages were similarly stretched out along recognized trails, and seldom moved away from them. On any given trail, or road, the number of suitable sites for a semi-permanent village is limited, but fric-

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Women are equally quick to ridicule the menfolk when there is justification.

This is also a time favored by youths for slipping off into the forest with their girl friends for some not very quiet lovemaking. Although lovemaking is not performed openly, no great attempt is made to conceal it. The general feeling is that if surprised in the act, one simply says hello (*kuribu*) politely and expects the intruder to continue on his way. Fathers, and mothers too, refer to the nuisance of a flirtatious son or daughter whom they might surprise in this way. The parent pretends to see nothing in such a case, and the youths claim, with more bravado than truth perhaps, not to be unduly disturbed unless they are making love to a relative.

Lovemaking generally takes place in the forest, though there is no fixed rule. It is thought somewhat exciting to make love in a hut, but not very healthy. There are preferences that individuals have for making love near a stream, or in a splash of sunlight, or in the dark depths of the forest. It is evidently a purely aesthetic consideration, and I have heard a number of youths who stated that the best time was while hunting. But moonlight evidently attracts a great number, and I have met several who talk, with great poetry, of the joys of masturbation when alone in the moonlight. On three rare occasions I have seen different individuals dancing, by themselves, in the moonlight and in the forest, away from the camp. The intimacy between the individual and the forest—one might almost say the act of making love to the forest—was expressed by one Mbuti who said, when I questioned him as to why he was dancing alone, that he was dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon. He then continued his dance with the utmost unconcern.

Not all lovemaking is quite so romantic, however, and when boys and girls are following a trail together, the procession may degenerate into a good-humored but undeniably lusty orgy. A boy may rip off a girl's outer bark cloth, if he can catch her, but he may never have intercourse with her without her permission. I know of no cases of rape, though boys often talk about their intentions of forcing reluctant maidens to their will.

There are no formal bachelor huts, but many camps have informal variants. They are sometimes built for an older youth by his mother, or they may be taken over by adolescent boys or girls when the occupant leaves for some reason. In such huts, and even out in the open, around the campfire, it is usual to see not only youths but also

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846 juice that when cut they have to be bent, with both ends upward so
951 that the liquid will not be lost. Sometimes they are cut into chunks and soaked in water that is used for washing the infant.

856 A third precaution that is taken is to tie a vine bracelet around one of the infant's wrists, or around his waist. A small piece of wood may be roughly threaded to the vine, and the stated function is again to give the infant strength, except that with specific reference to the wood, it is frequently said that it "gives the child the strength of the forest."

844 With regard to preferences among the women as to where they
845 give birth, it varies. But there is unanimity that if there is any dif-
778 ficulty at all, then the right thing to do is to go off away from the camp and into the forest, which will "help." The forest appears quite
778 clearly as helper and protector in the vine and wooden medicines and
755 charms, and in the scarification that will take place at the first sign
[851 of sickness. Even with adults this is done: the skin is cut in a number
856] of small slits with an arrow, and some of the flesh is gouged out. The ashes prepared from forest woods and plants are made into a paste with spittle and rubbed into the wounds. When the skin grows back, the black ash is still visible beneath, and is regarded as a source of the strength and health and happiness that derive from the forest.

846 Both parents are under food restrictions until the baby is old enough to crawl, the main one and the only general one being that they must not eat meat. The father may go hunting, but any meat that falls into his net is divided among the others. More often he stays away from the hunt, sending his net out with some youth. However, somewhere between one and two months after birth, and when the family net has made a particularly successful catch, the father will usually announce that he is eating meat again.

853 The only other restriction placed on the nuclear family by the crisis of birth is the restraint placed on the father, who is forbidden to have sexual intercourse with the mother as long as she is breast-feeding
853 the child. The restriction is quite definitely linked by the Mbuti to
845 the supply of milk, which is also given as the reason for their rather mild aversion to twins. I know of no record of twins who both survived into adulthood, and it is stated that one of them invariably
[847 dies. It is also stated that no woman would feed a child at each breast, and I understand that if twins are born, one is simply not fed by the mother, and is taken away and buried by her friends. But there is no fear of twins, and no ritual in connection with their birth or death.

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Finally it may be remarked that whereas in many African societies, including those of the neighboring villagers, birth fixes the social position of an individual through the structural ramifications of kinship, among the Mbuti it achieves the same end, to a less fixed degree, by placing the individual in a specific age group and relating the infant to a specific locality. The child might not be reared in that locality, but the fact will remain valid as a claim to band membership throughout his or her life. Adoption is often agreed upon in order that a child, or even an adult, may return to his natal band, regardless of what kin remain to him there.[1]

It will also be noticed that in the absence of the magical and supernatural protections that are sought for a newly born child among the villagers nearby, there is a lack of concern with the possibility of disaster, and only a concern that the child should be strong. Insofar as this strength is conveyed by washing the baby with the juice of forest vines, tattooing it with forest ashes, and binding it with forest symbols, this may be regarded as sympathetic magic. But it is better regarded as the beginning of a lifetime of close intimacy between the Mbuti and the forest, an intimacy that may or may not give the physical strength it is believed to convey, but that is undoubtedly responsible for the cohesive social strength found in this one omnipresent, omnipotent symbol of Mbuti unity, the forest.

The absence of formal ritual protection and of the invocation of supernatural aid and attention at birth is the first clear indication that for the Mbuti the norm is the good, and that this goodness derives directly from the forest, physically and spiritually. Although birth is primarily the affair of the nuclear family, all members of the band share the pleasure and the pride of the parents, concern themselves with the welfare and education of the child according to the functions of the different age groups, but they do not see that it is necessary to make of birth what we might here call a "spiritual" occasion. In referring to childbirth the men and women alike say, simply, that "it is the work of women, it is what they are for." There is nothing abnormal about the event, nor is there any expectancy of danger or complication, and so the band does not see that it is necessary to intervene with a formal religious festival.

[1] See Table 11 for examples of adoptions of boys and girls among net-hunters.

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bull, 1960[1]), I shall keep the description here to those essentials concerned with the structural implications of the *elima*.

The fact that it is not an individual family affair, to be concealed with shame as best possible, is doubly emphasized when two girls in a band, of quite different lineages, "see the blood" within a few days of each other. There will then be a joint *elima*. And there is also the selection by the girl or girls of the *bamelima*, the friends she likes and wants to accompany her for the duration of the festival, living with her in the *elima* hut. They will be drawn from her female age mates, and may or may not already have had their own *elima*. If they have not yet seen the blood, participation in their friend's *elima* will excuse them from having one of their own when the time comes. If a girl sees the blood, and a close friend thinks she is about to see it as well, the *elima* will be delayed, perhaps for several weeks.

As with birth, this life-cycle crisis does not evoke any sense of need for urgent ritual action, protective or otherwise. Its significance is of a different order. It is regarded as essentially natural and therefore good. Also as with birth, the personal importance of the occasion leads to an establishment of personal contact with the forest, a reification of the direct bond between the individual and the forest world; but the social importance of puberty for the band is recognized, so the band as such takes certain measures, both social and ritual, to mark the occasion.

The girl or girls with blood are expected to keep to their homes and an extension may be built onto one of their huts, or onto that of any friend or relative who is willing to house the *bamelima*. Every *elima* girl with blood has to choose a personal assistant, and the choice is left entirely to her, and again may fall on a relative, though more often it is a very close friend, of the same age group. They then invite other friends to join them in the *elima* hut, when it is ready. The assistants share such restrictions as are placed upon the *elima* girls, except that they are more free to leave the hut unaccompanied. There are few restrictions anyway, it seems, and they are mainly concerned with maintaining adherence to the schedule of instruction and activities. There are some minor food prohibitions, based on the personal taboos of the *elima* girls and their assistants, which in turn are based on their individual reactions to these foods as young children. If a certain food makes a child sick it may be forbidden to him until puberty, when he may try it again and abandon the taboo if it no longer affects him adversely. Sometimes, but not always, there is

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way to the forest. If the *elima* happens to be in a village camp, as it sometimes is for part of its duration, the girls will still go away off into the forest to sing their songs. The older men and women say that the festival should be held entirely in the forest, but the younger Mbuti point out that it is an occasion for rejoicing and feasting, and so it is much better to be near a village and eat off the villagers. Even when doing that, however, one is likely to come across broken saplings stuck in the ground alongside a trail many hours from the village camp, showing that the *bamelima* passed by there, "rejoicing the forest." Sometimes they may be heard in their peculiar antiphony with the forest, at other times the saplings appear swiftly and silently a few yards from an Mbuti youth as a sign that the *bamelima* are nearby and should not be disturbed. Sometimes youths, thinking they have left the *bamelima* safely in their hut in a village camp, are hours off in the forest in their usual boisterous, noisy way, and will find themselves attacked and chased by the girls, armed with sticks and whips.

Usually the girls are all together, but every now and then one of the *elima* girls and her assistant will go off together into the forest, and stay there for half a day or more. At such times the others sit around looking dejected, and complain of being deserted. The older women then say that they should not complain, that it is good for the girl to go away sometimes and "converse with the forest."

As at birth, there is a certain amount of decoration of the body with what might be considered as forest charms, and toward the end of the festival the girls paint each other with a white forest clay. The personification of the forest, and the frequency with which it is referred to, and the way in which this is done as though its personality were an ordinary matter of fact are another indication of the intense personal importance of the forest in the life of the Mbuti, of its character as a parent, a friend, and a lover, the provider of all things. But it cannot be interpreted as forest worship, for to the Mbuti it is simply a matter of fact.

One thing that is particularly interesting in consideration of the *bamelima* is that while it is very clearly an age group, it does two things. It does not deny individuality to the *elima* girl, who in fact is constantly displaying it and often causing friction as a result, but it effectively consolidates an age group that might otherwise have been rather lacking in cohesion. Girl's activities are, on the whole, less co-operative in nature than those of boys, and whereas boys are clearly formed into co-operative groups before arriving at puberty, this is not

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766 [768] two or three yards of the hut, which in that case continues to be occupied. The main difference between the death of a child and that of an adult is that the death of an adult is likely to be made into an occasion for a *molimo* festival; a child's death is seldom marked in this way, and if at all then only briefly.

761 765 621 Because the *molimo* has more to do with life than death it is dealt with separately in the section on religious life of the Mbuti. Here it should simply be noted that it coincides with the efforts of the elders to restore normality as quickly as possible. While personal grief is recognized and allowed, it is still resented and every effort is made to minimize it by those not so directly concerned. The majority of the band make every attempt to maintain a normal daily routine, and to ignore the death as far as possible. The *molimo* itself calls for vigorous hunting during the daytime, and equally vigorous singing and dancing at night. It involves the entire band except the children and through its very emphasis on life it reinforces band solidarity. Through the sheer pleasure found in *molimo* activities personal grief is lessened, and through the symbolic nature of some of the songs and dances the despair that death could otherwise awaken is averted. Death is acknowledged, in the *molimo* fire dance, as inevitable and as being unconnected with any unnatural force. The *molimo* songs stress that if death occurs it must occur at the will of the forest, and since the forest is good then death must be good. The *molimo*, however, goes [778] beyond a mere acceptance of death, and many of the songs and dances are sheer expressions of joy in life, and the stated objective of the *molimo* is to make the forest happy, "to rejoice the forest."

76 621 594 Thus death affects the nuclear family through the personal nature of the loss, and it is the duty of the nuclear family, in the forest context, to dispose of the dead. They are prevented by the rest of the band from giving way to any prolonged exhibition of grief, and in any case by the time death takes place much of their grief has been spent in the last moments of sickness. The family may be aided by others in the burial, though help is not generally needed. But from that moment on, the band takes charge of the situation and concentrates on restoring the normality of life. The extent to which the *molimo* is a band affair rather than the affair of the nuclear family concerned will be seen later. It will also be seen, then, how death is made into an occasion for reaffirming the bonds of age groups, and for establishing their distinct responsibilities.

761 765 If life begins, for the Mbuti, with little fanfare, it ends with one

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though he expected as much. Rather more serious is a medicine called, in the Epulu district, *anjo*. It is a paste made from the heart, brain and eyes, sometimes from other parts as well, of some highly prized game. The paste is charred and placed inside the horn of that animal, which is then inverted and stuck in the ground, usually near the family hearth. The paste is put on the body, most often the forehead, of the hunter and of members of his family. Sometimes it is even offered to privileged friends. It is believed to convey to the hunter the senses of the animal so that he will be able to deceive the animal as well as foresee his movements. However, the use of this individual magic is considered antisocial in many bands, particularly if it appears to be attended by success at the cost of others in the band. It may cause disputes, and then generally all such medicine is collected and burned.

By far the most significant magico-religious acts connected with the hunt are more of the order of religion than of magic. One is the hunting song (with or without dance), and the other is the hunting fire. The song or the dance may precede or follow a hunt. It is distinct from any other form of song or dance. The song form is rather complex and demands co-operation in a manner comparable to that demanded in the hunt itself. The dance is suggestively imitative of a successful hunt, but is by no means mere mime. Like the song form, the choreography is quite distinct, and is not used in any other context.

The hunting fire in the southern part of the net-hunting area takes the form of a fire lit near the trail just before the hunt sets out in the morning. It is generally lit by youths, always at the base of a young tree. When blazing it is covered with leaves, so the heavy smoke is given off. Men and women, as they pass by the fire on their way to the hunt, may stop to gossip, or they may pay no attention. I have not seen or heard of any accompanying ritual or invocation, the only explanation ever stated being that the fire is to rejoice the forest, and it would seem to have the same primary purpose as song and dance, that of attracting the attention of the forest. It is certainly believed that the fire will insure the protection of the Mbuti and help toward success in the hunt.

Further north, another form of hunting fire is used, associated with rather more ritual. There the net-hunters build the fire within the camp, whereas in the south it is always just outside. The fire is sur-

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rounded by a vine that is carefully staked into the ground by V-shaped twigs. Within the circle long twigs, clean of bark, sometimes simply burned to create a pattern, are stuck into the ground pointing in the direction the hunt is to take place. Any animal caught is brought back and placed within the circle before being divided.

There is undoubtedly village influence to be found in some of the more elaborate magical practices. The Mbuti themselves consider *anjo* as village magic, also the magic sticks within the hunting-fire circle. The fire, however, is used everywhere, and regardless of any other accompanying ritual, there is no ritual attitude toward it other than the belief that it will secure the attention, hence the blessing, of the protective forest.

One clear example of village influence is that in any village context the Mbuti are likely to state sexual taboos connected with the hunt. These vary according to the village tribal custom, and may involve prohibition of sexual intercourse before the hunt, either as a permanent rule (which would be inconvenient for people who hunt almost daily) or for special occasions or classes of people. A menstruating woman and her husband are forbidden to take part in the hunt, according to some village customs. A pregnant woman may be under restrictions, as may be her husband, and childbirth involves further restrictions among many village tribes. To all such customary practices the Mbuti gladly pay lip service. In the forest, however, forest values prevail, and I have come across no sexual taboos associated directly with the hunt. Indeed, the hunt is considered by many, married and unmarried, as an excellent and exciting time to slip away into the bush and copulate. But sexual activity is above everything else a matter of personal taste. If a pregnant woman stays in camp, it is more likely because she feels unwell. If a father stays behind with his wife and her newborn child, it is probably because he wishes to be with them, though there are sometimes stated prohibitions on hunting or eating meat until the family net traps a large antelope. This will be made the occasion for lifting the taboo and for naming the child.

However, it is impossible to discover any consistent pattern of actual behavior, the only consistency appearing in stated behavior, and this relates directly to local village custom, which is based on the belief that the forest is ritually dangerous, unclean. Any villager in a position of crisis, such as becoming pregnant, being born, suffering from sickness or even injury, during menstruation or while near

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death, will be kept well clear of the forest, whose malign influence could adversely affect the outcome of the crisis.

While the net-hunt divides the band into nuclear-family units insofar as each net clearly belongs to a nuclear family, there is no particular order for setting out on the hunt. Nuclear families may split up right at the beginning, children joining their age mates, women going off together, the menfolk forming clusters of friends or brothers, in much the order in which they will hunt. It is always decided the night before, by common discussion and consent, where the hunt is to take place, and everyone makes his way there of his own accord, generally passing by the hunting fire on the way. On arrival the women will already be mostly separated from the men, and invisibly take up their stations while the men silently stretch their nets out through the undergrowth, supporting them on the foliage, the ends of each net being tied to those on either side of it.

The hunters generally take up their stand near the center of their net, but the practice varies according to their relationship with their hunting neighbors, and also according to whether they have any sons with them at the net. When the extremes are ready (the setting up begins in the middle of the semicircle) a signal is given to the women, who immediately start closing in from their opposing semicircle, beating the ground with branches, shouting, yelling and hooting. The men remain concealed until the very last moment. They always lie in wait behind the nets, and will only cross into the circle to go to someone's assistance when game is caught. Game is not generally shot at or speared until it is in the net or until it shows signs of escaping. It is then that the Mbuti must know the likely whereabouts of all his fellows, as the strophanthus poison used most widely is as deadly to human beings as to animals.[3]

Once an animal is killed, and each cast of the nets may bring in several animals, it is taken by the wife of the lucky net-owner and put into her carrying basket, to be shared out on return to the camp. If the animal is a large one, and too heavy to put in a basket, either one

[3] When the poison is prepared, one test for its strength is to make a slight cut in the forearm and to allow the blood to trickle down for an inch. The poisoned wooden tip of an arrow is then touched to the blood below the wound. If, as the Mbuti say, the poison "walks up the arm," they claim to feel a tickling sensation and hurriedly wipe the blood away. If the poison does not "walk up the arm" it is not strong enough. So wary are the Mbuti of poisoned arrows that they carry them thoroughly sheathed in a bundle of leaves, in case they accidentally scratch themselves. Also, when they have fired and lost a poisoned arrow, they may spend a considerable time trying to find it rather than leave it as a possible danger to other hunters.

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it, the children standing guard at the net or at the fringes of the hunt), nonetheless the nuclear family is divided in the hunt, and both men and women are forced to co-operate with their neighbors, who may or may not be kin. The hunt above all is not an individual affair but involves the band as a whole, as is borne out in the ultimate disposition of the spoils.

That the net-hunt is regarded as a matter of importance to the forest, regarding the forest in a religious sense, is evidenced by the hunting fire, the song and the dance, rather than by any elaborate ritual, purification, or sexual taboo. The close relationship between the hunt as an economic activity and the hunt as a religious act is seen in the widespread custom of rubbing ashes from charred forest woods into the skin, sometimes slitting the skin first to achieve permanent tattoo marks. This is stated to secure the protection of the forest.

Whereas I was never able to secure confirmation of Schebesta's description of food offerings being made to the forest, except through villager informants, there is very definitely a strongly felt and stated urge to use every part of the animal, and never to kill more than is necessary for the band's needs for the day. This in fact may be one reason why the Mbuti are so reluctant to kill an excess of game and preserve it for exchange with the villagers. There is no expression of joy in the capturing and killing of an animal, though the excitement still runs strongly. The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behavior. On the other hand, a bird caught alive may deliberately be toyed with, its feathers singed off over the fire while it is still fluttering and squawking until it is finally burned or suffocated to death. This again is usually done by youths who take the same nervous pleasure in the act; very rarely a young hunter may absentmindedly do the same thing. Older hunters and elders generally disapprove, but do not interfere.

The respect seems to be not for animal life but for the game as a gift of the forest, and a gift that may be withheld if abused by waste. It is further considered that good hunting is essential to the success of either an *elima* or a *molimo* festival, and during such festivals certain hunts are devoted expressly to supplying the festival with food.

Among the archers, the system of sharing game and the respect for game are comparable in their political and religious connotations:

mushrooms, of which there are many edible varieties to be had throughout the year, the sweet palm and tender reeds, which are found by following its tiller, also along the ground, then gathering with a stick for the roots of the reed, only of which there are again many varieties at any time of year, and those berries. There are the succulent fruits and a few leafy vegetables, though the latter are rarely used except as herbs. However, they are likened to the cultivated in the village manioc veg, which is cooked as a spinach, and perhaps it is because of the availability of manioc veg and their more pleasant taste that the indigenous vegetable is falling into disuse.

Among the net-hunters, gathering takes place during the course of the net-hunt, on the way to and from the hunt, and whenever women are out of the sets. Women carry baskets on their backs, with a tumpline over their foreheads, as do their young daughters in the same way that the boys have an age group during the years as do the girls. The boys split into two sections and guard each extremity of their hunting semicircle. However the girls split into two groups and beat at each end of the semicircle of beaters. Only the older boys and girls are expected to act as adults, and even they could not necessarily act with their parents. The girls go off in foraging parties of their own, and women go off in twos and threes to do their gathering. There is no recognizable kinship pattern of food among the hunting band of these gathering associations. Women or girls who gather together are likely to be friends of approximately the same age, but it would be only generalization possible.

Men, not having baskets with them, do not like to gather effectively, but if they pass a bank of mushrooms they will pick whatever they can carry without encumbering themselves, and they will send the younger boys back to camp with their other kill.

Gathering, then, is a much more individual affair than hunting among the net-hunters. Even among the children, where the women are not organized on the hunt, they only go off in twos or threes to gather, and the same tendency is observed by the men to gather alone every time they have the opportunity. The goods so obtained remain individual property from a commercial, though sharing may take place.

There are no rituals and no magic associated with gathering, no incantations as it is primarily a women's occupation. Hunting songs are frequently sung on gathering expeditions, as with hunting songs, the *shima* songs are composed to glorify the abundance of the forest here,

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and since the forest is benevolent the songs thus are thought to secure protection. In point of fact they do, for the throaty chorus of even two or three Mbuti women is enough to scare away any game. When not singing the women beat their hands together, shout or talk loudly to each other, for the same purpose. I know of only one woman injured while gathering. She was alone, which was the first mistake, and the first question asked when news came back to camp that she had been attacked by a buffalo was the apparently surprising one, "Was she not singing?" She was not, nor was she "talking to the forest," and that was her second mistake, the consequence of which was death. The Mbuti are practical enough to recognize the "noise" value of song, but they see more in it than that.

When the Mbuti are near a source of plantation foods and can acquire them by one means or another, then their daily diet is largely vegetable. The meal taken before going hunting and the snack on the hunt are both likely to be entirely vegetarian, meat being eaten only at the evening meal. Even then it may be served with one or another vegetable. Even when the Mbuti are far away from a supply of village foods and living entirely on the forest they still rely heavily on vegetable foods, and gathering must be considered at least equally important with hunting as a subsistence activity. From what I was able to see, this is true among the archers as well as among the net-hunters. It is also true that throughout the forest the supply of forest vegetable foods, though varying, is constant and sufficient, frequently ample. If there is any time when there is a greater abundance than at other times, it is during the honey season.

HONEY

Falling approximately in the middle of our calendar year, and lasting a full two months, the honey season is of vital importance to the Mbuti not only from a nutritional point of view but structurally. We have already seen how at this time the net-hunting bands split up into minimal sections, separating hostile or factious elements and consolidating existing friendships, so that when the band re-forms it will have resolved most of the internal dissensions built up over the previous year, on the whole reaffirming old loyalties but always asserting some that are new. The archer band, normally segmented, joins together during the honey season in what is essentially the same process. It is significant that the honey season should be marked

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band to the village as its *capita* or *sultani*. In the Epulu band, Njobo was an undisputed great hunter, knew the territory as well as anyone and had killed four elephants single-handed. He was a good enough Mbuti not to attempt to dominate any hunting discussion in the forest, merely to take a normal part. If he ever appeared to be overly aggressive or insistent he was shouted down and ridiculed, although highly popular. He was also the one chosen to represent the band to the villagers. Ekianga, on the other hand, was less generally popular and was the source of some friction, having three wives (one the sister of another prominent member of the band), but he was a fine hunter, endowed with exceptional physical stamina, and he too knew the territory well. Even at the height of his unpopularity he was one of the most effective "leaders" of the hunt. So was Nikiabo, a youth who had achieved some notoriety by killing a buffalo when barely out of childhood. Although a bachelor, he had a net of his own and took a prominent part in all hunting discussions. Makubasi, a young married hunter, was also accorded special respect because of his hunting prowess and his physical strength, combined with his knowledge of the territory. But while these four can be singled out as exceptional, they could either separately or together be outvoted by the rest of the hunters. On such occasions they were compelled either to give their assent to the popular decision or to refrain from joining the hunt that day. None of them had the slightest authority over any others. Nor was any moral pressure brought to bear in influencing a decision through personal considerations or respect. The only such moral consideration ever mentioned was that when the band arrived at a decision, it was considered "good," and that it would "please the forest." Anyone not associating himself with the decision was, then, likely to displease the forest, and this was considered "bad." Any individual intent on strengthening his own argument might appeal to the forest on grounds that his point of view was "good" and "pleasing"; only the ultimate general decision, however, would determine the validity of his claim.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that while the forest is appealed to almost as an arbiter, and is considered as imposing the standards and even the leadership, which all Mbuti follow, this only holds good in the forest, where the forest directly "feeds its children." Once in the village, actions concerning the village are never judged by whether or not they are pleasing to the forest; a totally different set of values pertains.

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CHAPTER 11

Government: Internal

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Before attempting to understand the over-all system of government in Mbuti society, it is necessary to distinguish between different fields of authority, for each field of activity has its own leaders, drawn from a particular segment of the community. It is in this way that authority is dispersed throughout the band; every adult is accorded special respect in one field or another, but none can claim respect in all fields. Individual authority is unthinkable, and not only are there no chiefs or headmen in Mbuti society; there are not even any councils of elders or any ritual specialists such as prophets or diviners. Such adults as have respect in any particular field at any particular moment do not even have any authority; they can merely claim to be heard. Their decision is likely to be given general assent and, as in economic matters, that decision is then said to be "good," and "pleasing" to the forest. The forest personified as a benevolent divinity remains as the only recognized authority, one which sometimes expresses its feelings with unmistakable clarity; an excessive storm, falling trees, poor hunting and ill health may all be taken as signs of displeasure, while good weather and good health and good hunting are indications that all is well. But often the forest remains silent. Then the Mbuti have to sound its feelings out through discussion. Dreams may be taken into account, but there is no question of waiting for visible signs of the forest's pleasure. The delegation of authority is clear; the decision of the whole band, the very fact of unanimity, is sufficient sign of the favor of the forest. There is always diversity of opinion, freely expressed, but prolonged disagreement is considered as "noise," and offensive to the forest. Unanimity, therefore, is a powerful and positive value, equated with the opposite to noise—quiet, or *ekimi*.

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began more and more frequently to talk from midcamp. Like Asuku, he complained about laziness and bad hunting, common enough complaints but seldom aired from midcamp. When he began to claim special attention by virtue of being Njobo's "son," however, he was promptly ridiculed. People stopped listening to him, even from midcamp, and dared him to name them—a procedure that commands attention. Even unmarried youths called out, "Your noise will kill us all," and children began to imitate his whining voice. Masisi, a cousin of Njobo and, with Manyalibo, about to move from the status of hunter to that of elder, took Mbaaka aside at one point and talked to him quietly, recalling what had happened to Asuku.

Seeing that Mbaaka at last had begun to listen to reason, his brother, who up till then had never interfered, made a loud and rude joke that brought the whole camp down with laughter, then said, "Everyone is crazy—I'm going to sleep," and promptly went to sleep. Masisi then returned to midcamp with Mbaaka and said that if anyone else tried to be funny he would turn himself into a villager and bewitch everyone. A youth took up the thread and said that the village was responsible for all the noise anyway, because his girl friend never listened to him any more and was a bad cook (a typical pygmaean non sequitur). This rather forced good humor persisted throughout the next day, with the women telling jokes and laughing loudly the moment the conversation drifted in the direction of Mbaaka's former complaints. There were a few more remarks to the effect that the village was indeed responsible for all the noise, and the rest of Mbaaka's stay (two further months) was unmarred by any repeated claims to privilege through kinship to Njobo.

It is plain, then, that while any movement toward individual authority, conscious or otherwise, is sharply countered, and while individual authority is virtually nil, there is nonetheless a clear basic framework to support the values of the hunting band. There is the division of leadership, according to field, throughout the entire band, yet there is the midcamp site from which anyone may harangue all present. Although he has no means of compelling attention, it is generally accorded, and may be further compelled by pointing to or naming the individuals concerned. Further it is plain that the elders, including those hunters whose position is being gradually taken over by their children, act as final arbitrators, always careful to stress that what they say is a matter of their opinion, or of their heart. Only when unanimity is beyond question is an opinion or an action con-

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554 620 [778] [156] sidered "pleasing to the forest." Asuku had placed himself, physically and morally, beyond the forest.

602 604 554 In the two instances cited so far, although the kin relationship of Asuku and Mbaaka to Njobo was the source of their claim to special privileges, this was recognized as a village attitude, and a valid village argument. It is noteworthy that the details of the relationship were never spelled out once, except by Asuku and Mbaaka. The attitude of all the Mbuti was one of respect for Njobo, but of equal recognition of all those who shared the same central hearth, including some who were not even affines. It was stated very clearly by Moké [621] that though Asuku was a member of the band by virtue of having shared the same hearth, he had no more privileges than anyone else of that hearth, and was under the same obligations of respect and responsibility to his elders.

554 602 There was one other elder who could claim the same respect as Moké, by reason of age, and that was Tungana. But Moké had the added advantages of being a widower and virtually unrelated to any- [608] one in the band. He claimed fictitious relationship with Tungana, it being said that the same foster mother fed them both, and he frequently gave Tungana's "clan" name as being his own. Clan names [614] were seldom mentioned in disputes, except in a village context, and even then they in fact referred to a unit that was either nonlineal or cognatic, and not confined to one clan. Rather than differentiate be- [621] tween lineal units, the Mbuti used the concept of the hearth (*kuma*). [354] Each family had its own hearth, but there were also several central hearths, each shared by a number of families.

602 621 [354] Each camp, except the smallest, was distinguished by several such central hearths, effectively breaking the camp into subcamps that usually revealed a line of fission or fusion, but which frequently ran counter to all kinship considerations. As far as the Epulu band was concerned (and I believe this to be true of many other bands), authority was again, as with other aspects of life, more associated with age and territory than with kinship. Each section of the camp was, 621 in a limited sense, a political unit, and sometimes disputes would 578 remain confined to one section without spreading to others. A man 626 could invoke kinship or friendship to go to the aid of a disputant in another section, if he wished, but somebody like Moké was even more free to wander wherever he liked. The rules of self-help among the Mbuti are quite simple. It is perfectly proper to hit someone with [152] anything wooden; it is not at all proper to draw blood, nor to hit any-

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meaningless trivia. Such disputes I have put in a class by themselves, though wherever a deeper underlying dispute was known to have lain behind an apparently trivial dispute, it has been classified accordingly.

DISPUTES CONCERNING FOOD

1. A mortar was borrowed by Njobo's sister, Teningbengé, from Amaloku, Amabosu's wife. There is no kin relationship. Teningbengé's subsequent cooking did not please her son (Maipé, actually her nephew), who complained that the mortar must have been dirty. Amaloku, who by then had retrieved the mortar, said that on the contrary it was the food put into the mortar that was dirty, and not the mortar itself. Maipé promptly seized a log of wood and started fighting with Amabosu. Amaloku and Teningbengé fought with sticks. Amabosu's mother, Sau, joined the fight, against her daughter-in-law's oldest sister, old Asofalinda. The dispute remained thus confined and was watched with much enthusiasm and laughter by the rest of the camp until Ekianga, brother to Amaloku and Asofalinda, stepped in and stopped the fighting by seizing the sticks and logs and throwing them away. Everyone returned to his hut and continued the evening meal.

2. Masisi, a great hunter, complained that the hunting was bad and said the band should move to the village and eat there. His cousin, Manyalibo, moved to midcamp and began a tirade against Masisi and everyone else for always complaining there was not enough food. He cited ten antelope caught that morning as evidence of the good hunting, and said that everyone should be happy and should be making the forest happy by singing, with so much food. And if they wanted more food they should hunt more and make the hunt even better. He said that if Masisi's noise continued he was going to leave.

Moké then took his place and quietly told everyone that nobody should leave for anywhere, that nobody could deny that the hunt was reasonably good, and that therefore the forest was pleased. If they moved or made too much noise it would be displeased. The forest would be happy if the whole band were to set out the next day on the biggest hunt of all. Then when the weather was better (it had been raining for some days, always a cause of discontent and discomfort) and nobody was making a noise, the whole band could move wherever it liked (knowing that in such a mood it would move fur-

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that this was not customary during the honey season, and was displeasing to the forest. He also added that as his section was too small to hunt, Manyalibo was under an obligation to send him a share of all the meat caught by his part of the band. At the same time he set about trying to encourage the usually unwanted Cephu to join him, and swell his section to an economic hunting size. Cephu, always unpredictable, refused, though he agreed to send three nets as a token of goodwill. He never did. These communications were made through a series of visits made by Kelemoké, Cephu's nephew, between the three sections. The fourth section was in the village, and did not enter the dispute.

Two neighboring bands, hearing[2] that (a) the Epulu territory was exceptionally well endowed with honey that year, and that (b) Masisi was looking for reinforcement, took advantage of the situation to trespass judicially in the southeastern extreme of the territory, well away from all the others. Their overtures, made in the one instance by a meeting on neutral ground, and in the other by a personal visit to Masisi's camp by Herafu, a distant affine, were coldly rejected, and they were told to leave the territory or there would be war. In each case they responded that the territory was not Masisi's, and that in any case they had rights to the territory through affinal ties. They added that in view of the surplus of honey Masisi was offending the forest by trying to steal it all for himself.

This put Masisi very much in the wrong. He then raised an issue, long known, to divert attention from himself. He pointed out to his own section that Manyalibo's camp had a drying rack in it, sure indication that he was trading with the village. This was a major crime, and two youths went to investigate. They found it indeed to be so, and without much argument Manyalibo offered them food to take back to Masisi. After a great deal of further argument, and threats by the youths that they would tell the rest of the villagers of what appeared to be a secret alliance between two of their members and Manyalibo's section, the youths were allowed to take all the meat they could see, and Manyalibo promised to send a net to his "brother" so he could hunt for himself. Two days later he did this. Attracted by the meat, Cephu sent two of his section to join Masisi, and eventually joined himself. The rift between Masisi and Manyalibo, however, remained, and they did not re-form in the same camp again that

[2] News of this kind travels between bands via the villages, and through the constant exchange of visits between cognates and friends.

year. While Manyalibo's crime was serious enough, desecrating the forest in the honey season by hunting for the villagers, Masisi's was equally, if not more, serious, in his attitude to the trespassing bands. The night before Cephu joined him, Masisi was made the subject of discussion, from the middle of his own camp, by several youths and young hunters. They all asserted the right of their in-laws to enter their own territory, to hunt or gather honey, whether they were wanted or not. They agreed that permission should have been asked first, but that in light of the surplus of honey in the forest it was hardly necessary. The discussion ended by everyone agreeing that all the noise[3] of the past weeks was plainly the fault of the villagers who wanted the meat that caused the rift to begin with. This decision was followed by a plea from Masisi for much singing to make the forest happy again. The honey songs were immediately taken up with renewed vigor, and Masisi was prominent in maintaining them right to the end of the honey season.

6. Largely through preoccupation with Cephu, Manyalibo and Herafu, with the Effundi Somali band and now yet another trespassing band from the neighboring Eboyo territory, Masisi's camp had several days with little honey and little food of any kind. All men in the group took turns in stating their complaints from midcamp, each promising to find out who was responsible and threatening to name them. On the fourth successive day of such "noise," the singing having deteriorated, much to the disgust of the youths and the women, Masisi was particularly irritable and began a long harangue about how bad the whole thing was, including his present camp, and saying that he could name those who were responsible for it all being bad, but instead he was going to name those who must go out the next day and collect lots of honey and make it well again. He then named all the hunters. But he continued arguing and, getting more and more irate, began to imply that those he had just named were in fact those responsible. There were growing murmurs of protest, which only excited Masisi further, and there would almost certainly have been a fight had it not been for the intervention of the youths and the young women. Two of the women and one youth seized the *ngbengbe*,

[3] "Noise" is a direct translation of the word *akami* in the local dialect of KiBira, or *kelelé* in KiNgwana. It is used in ordinary parlance, but always with an unfavorable connotation. It is given special significance by adding the comment that noise is bad (*sinana*). This is tantamount to a moral judgment, invoking the supernatural sanctions of the forest, for noise is also said to kill the forest (*akami a mu nduru*), just as it is said to kill the hunt (*akami a mu mukira*).

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had either given in or had actually encouraged Ekianga, and Amabosu had supported her. This brought a mild cry of protest from Amabosu, and hearing it Arobanai rounded on him and asked him whether or not he was an Mbuti, for he had not behaved like one. What did it matter whether he was out of the same stomach as Kamaikan or not, were they not all *apua'i* (the term of friendship that covers brothers, sisters and age mates)? And was it not more important whether something was right or wrong than whose stomach who came from?

Finding this an unexpectedly dramatic declaration, and one which made Moké visibly sit up, and almost certainly feeling somewhat fatigued, Arobanai suddenly stopped and brightly said that she was going to get some sleep, the rest could do as they pleased. As she strode into her hut Moké came over and stirred at the central fire. Not addressing anyone in particular he said that this thing had gone on long enough, and that he did not want to hear another word about it. He said that if disputes continued they would kill the camp completely and absolutely, that the forest would refuse to accept the band and would send all its hunts back empty. And what Ekianga did was a matter for him to think about, for if he continued sleeping with Kamaikan it would almost certainly kill their child, and that would again displease the forest. He ended by saying, still staring carefully at the fire, "It is no longer a matter for us, it is a matter for the forest."

20. A month or so later Kamaikan's young son became ill. Arobanai was not in the camp at the time, but Loku was. Nobody mentioned Moké's warning that the boy would become ill if Ekianga continued sleeping with Kamaikan (as he did), and Amabosu was shouted down when he appeared about to say something to this effect. He changed his mind and went over to Loku, and said that she was to blame; she would have to cure the child by cicatrizing it. In the village this is tantamount to an accusation of sorcery, cicatrization being an admission of unknowing guilt by which the accused at the same time absolves himself and does all that is possible to negate the curse. The Mbuti know the belief and the custom, and sometimes, as in a case like this, they follow the custom without following the belief. Loku put up the expected resistance to the idea, and Amabosu chased her with a stick. The youths and hunters followed the show with enjoyment, and Manyalibo made jokes about nobody daring to come near him because he was the biggest sorcerer of all. Eventually Loku

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village itself was being pressed by the administration to increase its productivity at the same time that it was being pressed to supply the administration with more labor. In turn the villagers tried to press the Mbuti into supplying them with more food. Accustomed to a bare subsistence economy, the Mbuti could never quite see the necessity, nor did they altogether feel it was right or that it would be pleasing to the forest. Their belief, as far as I could determine, was not so much that they would be punished by the forest, but rather that the hunt would "be closed," that they would not get the unlawful surplus, that they might not even get enough for themselves.

To counter this the villagers offered divers kinds of medicine[9] for use in the forest, and agreed to make even more powerful medicine in the village. Sometimes the villagers offer to come into the forest, with a ritual specialist, to make medicine. The Mbuti tend to allow this, as it is profitable to them. Occasionally, however, the habit lingers, and whether or not *anjo* was originally a village or an Mbuti custom, it is now considered as a village trick, and disliked as such. *Anjo* is made by taking an antelope horn and filling it with a paste made from special parts of the antelope, charred black. This paste is then applied with a stick to the body of the hunter, to convey to him the senses of the animal.

This custom could sit perfectly well among the archers, where hunting is on a more individual basis. But among the net-hunters its use was taken as a sign of desire for personal gain above communal gain. On one occasion, when the hunting was not particularly good, *anjo* horns were rounded up from all over the camp, eight in all, and destroyed in the central fire. There was some protest from the owners, but not much. It was generally agreed that this made everyone the same, and that was how things should be.

From all the above, and from the rest of the disputes recorded in my notes, totalling 124, not counting the petty daily squabbles of no apparent import other than as an indication of bad temper, one of the most significant features is the small number of cases in which any

[9] Among these medicines is that encouraged by the Arab slave traders in search of ivory, specifically to give success in the elephant hunt. Known as *esumba*, *ishumba*, and divers other spellings, it is sometimes confused with a love medicine of the same name, and even more frequently with the *molimo* of the Mbuti, the word *esumba* or *lusumba* being used to describe the Mbuti *molimo* when speaking in KiNgwana, language of the Arabized Bantu tribe. It is perfectly possible that the two practices became intermingled, both, from the Mbuti point of view, being concerned with the pleasure of the forest.

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attempt is made to settle the issue in question one way or the other, even verbally, and the equally small number in which direct action is taken. The percentages are given as follows:

DISPUTE	*Number Recorded*	*Number of Decisions or Judgments made*	*Instances of Positive Action*
Food	67	5 (7.5%)	4 (5.9%)
Sex	37	4 (10.8%)	5 (13.5%)
Village	11	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Theft	5	3 (60%)	
Territory	4		3 (75%)

These figures indicate the greatest degree of decision, either by the passing of opinions (judgments) or by the taking of action, in the least frequent types of dispute.

In the most common disputes of all, those arising out of trivia and having no particular direction and no specific purpose, it is only about one in a hundred that comes to a head in a way that calls for action or decision, such as the case of the two brothers (34). Such disputes gave frequent opportunity for the voicing of opinions on almost any matter, and acted as a mechanism by which most incipient disputes of a more serious nature were detected and aired before they grew to major proportions.

An examination of all the recorded disputes shows that without a doubt there are forces working toward order in Mbuti society, despite its unformalized nature and the absence of political or legal "systems." Such forces include the compelling demands of the stomach, which suffers directly from any dispute that interrupts the hunting and gathering economy, as any major dispute will; the weight of public opinion, expressed verbally, or through ridicule or mime, or in action such as thrashing (rare, and only for youths) or ostracism and exile. These are the negative forces against antisocial behavior. There are equally positive forces toward social behavior, including the esteem of one's age mates and elders, the affection of children, the contentment of a full stomach and, perhaps above all, the belief in the personal benevolence of the forest.[10] The positive aspect of the

[10] Fortune (1935) describes a parallel situation among the Manus, who, like the Mbuti, respect morality beyond the pressures of social sanctions. Fortune claims that the religious sanctions provide a socially established way of keeping the social sentiment "quick," and of bringing offenders to book without seeming to be personal. The latter aspect of religious sanctions is probably more vital for the Mbuti, where any dispute is

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forest as an incentive toward good behavior is far more important and far more strong than its negative aspect as a deterrent against bad behavior.

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likely to be highly disruptive but where disputes nonetheless occur. Any personal intervention or judgment would only be likely to lead to further disputes. The impersonal nature of the forest as arbitrator and judge maintains the impersonality of the laws; or if the forest is considered as endowed with personality, it is a spiritual personality and owes no more allegiance to one Mbuti than to another, and so is still impersonal in this context.

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uals acquire the reputation of possessing the necessary skills. The doctors in particular possess such skills as part of their profession as diviners and curers, but even they recognize manipulative power in others, and do not try to effect a monopoly.

If the magic fails, it is considered that the manipulation was faulty and will be tried again. Several successive failures will be attributed to the intervention of supernatural forces, and will then involve witchcraft or sorcery.

As shown earlier (p. 54 *seq.*), village magic, even regarded as it should be, in context—as scientifically valid—has little to offer the Mbuti. It may nominally impinge upon their world, for there are, for instance, divers forms of magic to protect plantations against Mbuti raiders. But the Mbuti attitude to magic is different, for they recognize village magic as a mere attempt to control a situation, and not as a scientifically valid process. Brought face to face with such magic they may be wary, but primarily they are skeptical.

In their own world the unknowns are far fewer, and the need for control over events scientifically beyond their control is far less keenly felt. Such actions as may be described as magical, pertaining to health, weather or the hunt, involve an identification with the forest, being forms of sympathetic magic. In this respect, then, they are in a sense religious acts, for the forest is regarded as their protector. It would be difficult to determine whether the hunting fire is meant to placate or propitiate the forest, thus being a religious act involving a belief in a spiritual force, or whether it is thought to actively and directly affect the forest game, luring it into the nets. Mbuti attitudes, both expressed and observable, are mixed; the elements of religious belief, however, are never entirely absent.

The protective "magic" used to secure good health for a newborn baby, a vine bracelet and wooden charm, equally involves in a very real sense a religious belief in the power and strength and protectiveness of the forest, as well as making a more truly "magical" connection between the physical strength of the forest vine and trees and the weakness of the newborn baby, using the charms as a medium through which this strength can flow.

All this makes honey magic all the more outstanding, for it accords honey gathering far more ritual attention than is accorded to the economically incomparably more important activities of hunting and gathering. Some of the magic is slight and individual—a piece of bark cloth belonging to a girl or a woman is put in a cleft stick with a piece

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the power believed in. There is not a solitary instance to show the belief in a malevolent power against which protection must be sought. This is plainly different from village magic, which is essentially pragmatic and not in any way related to a central value system. We showed earlier (pp. 53–62) how magic does not provide a means by which the villagers can control the Mbuti. By a comparison of the two systems of magic we can see in effect how clearly they indicate major value differences despite initial outward similarities. In particular, the Mbuti attitude to the forest as a benevolent central value in their lives can be seen, and while in village magic we see only the lack of such a central value, when we examine witchcraft and sorcery we see its exact polar opposite.

And it will be remembered how (pp. 57–59) the Mbuti recognize the difference in attitudes toward magic, and put it to good use. The villagers regard Mbuti culture as impoverished in all respects, and the lack of the magic so abundant in village life is part of their argument. In making this lack of magic an excuse for the allegedly poor hunting that has deprived their *kpara* of meat, the Mbuti turn the situation nicely to their advantage, and turn the argument of the villagers against them. Thus although village magic and forest magic are different and distinct, the areas overlap in such a way as to deepen the opposition between the two worlds.

WITCHCRAFT

With witchcraft the situation is different, for this is something peculiar to the village world. Earlier (pp. 59–60) we showed some of the ways in which village witchcraft (often confused by the Mbuti with sorcery) impinges on forest life. Again, the villagers regard the lack of witchcraft in Mbuti culture as a sign of cultural poverty, and in their own belief in the power of witchcraft they seek to use it in their constant struggle to impose some kind of control over the hunters. However, the Mbuti again make use of the village belief in witchcraft for their own ends, using it as a means of escape from situations in which they would otherwise be culpable and stand to lose a good exchange relationship.

In their own forest world, however, witchcraft plays no part, except insofar as it is recognized as a useful device for deflecting blame, and is thus occasionally used, tongue in cheek, to resolve a dispute. As indicated in the foregoing chapter, the prime objective in the settle-

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for there are other mechanisms to deal with the situations with which witchcraft, in village life, deals. As indicated, it may play a minor and supplementary role in the dispersal of blame in a dispute, but completely without involving any belief in the actual presence of witchcraft substance. It is highly significant that the concept of supernatural power in this form is utterly foreign to the Mbuti, and this places them in a somewhat disadvantageous position when brought face to face with the village notion of sorcery, and the practice of cursing.

SORCERY

While the Mbuti make limited use of village concepts of magic and witchcraft for their own practical ends, they make no such use of sorcery, having for it a complete abhorrence. The villagers themselves never admit to being sorcerers, for sorcery is by definition antisocial and evil, but they may use the threat of sorcery (pp. 60–62) and claim to have employed a sorcerer against the Mbuti. More likely still, they may seek the aid of the local doctor to effect a curse against the Mbuti for nonfulfillment of their side of a bargain.

From the village point of view there is a world of difference between a sorcerer's curse and a doctor's curse, but from the Mbuti point of view they are one and the same thing. The theoretical and institutional aspects of magic and witchcraft the Mbuti can appreciate and turn to their advantage. Confronted with sorcery they have no recourse but flight. Flight in itself is significant, for it is flight away from the village into the forest or, if already in the forest, then it is flight further into the forest. On the whole it is a firm belief that sorcery is ineffective outside the village, but sometimes circumstances (such as poison) combine to indicate otherwise, and then it becomes a question of proximity to the village. Once again, however, as with magic, we find the Mbuti regarding the forest as a place of refuge, a place where they are sure of protection.

Against witchcraft, all the Mbuti have to do is to acknowledge being witches and go through the necessary purifications; the belief never touches them. Against sorcery, apart from flight, they have no means of defense for there is no counterpart in their experience. Sorcery implies the use of supernatural powers to effect harm on someone. Two concepts are involved that are foreign to the Mbuti: one is that a supernatural power can be used for anything but the social good, and the second is that anyone could wish, anonymously as it

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"There is no more, Grandmother." "Yes there is, give it, my bad child." I was very afraid. I threw it all down and said, "That is all, Grandmother, take it and go. There is no more. Take it and return to your place. I shall stay here."

"Thank you, my child, I shall return. Stay well."

"Go well, Grandmother."

I sat with eyes [i.e., watchfully] and waited for daylight. When daylight came I climbed down. I looked for the footprints of my grandmother. There were no footprints. "Ah!" I said. "It was truly an evil spirit. I did well to throw down all my honey, or it would have killed me completely."

That is why I returned empty-handed.

If in telling the stories the Mbuti do so to such good effect that they half convince themselves, they more than convince the villagers. The advantages of the situation to the Mbuti are as obvious as they are considerable. But at the same time it has to be pointed out that the forest itself *is* hostile to the villagers, and they have very real reason to dislike and fear it. It not only makes their life as cultivators hard and uncertain but it makes communication through the forest highly dangerous, to the extent that, until the road along which the villages are now eagerly clustered was built across the middle of the forest, the villages were very self-contained units with little intercommunication. Even now villagers will walk twice as far or more by road to reach another village, rather than take a simple shortcut across the forest. Unversed as they are in forest lore, its dangers are real to the villagers and there are frequent instances of villagers disappearing without trace even while on a relatively short trip. They are promptly added to the legion of forest spirits by their relatives, who have an even greater fear of the forest from then on.

The Mbuti, however, know the forest and its ways, and the dangers it has to offer are exceptionally few and far between. There is certainly nothing in the course of natural events in the forest to suggest to hunters and gatherers any trace of hostility. There is a great abundance of material goods, and of health and security, all of which suggest benevolence. This is taken up in the final section on the forest world, dealing with the religious life of the Mbuti.

One of the best examples of the kind of use to which the Mbuti put village beliefs that do not tally with their own is seen in the following legend (quoted in *The Forest People*, Chapter 7). It makes

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having been there they do not know what it is like, and not knowing what it is like they cannot predict what their behavior will be. They say that to try and go into the future is to "walk blindly," and their response to villagers, missionaries or any who claim a knowledge of afterlife is to say, "How do you know. Have you died and been there?" They liken such discussion to the talk of a hunter who suggests hunting in a certain place without ever having been there, or a woman who goes off in a set direction to gather a certain kind of mushroom without having seen them growing in any particular place there. These are people who act "emptily," or whose heads are loose and not properly attached to the body.

However, this disclaimer to absolute knowledge of the nature of the future or of afterlife is in itself a characteristic that I found to be universal among the Mbuti, at least within my own experience. This did not prevent individuals from having ideas about the unknown, but as already indicated, such speculation was considered as fruitless, and took the form of legend and was listened to with interest, and often with amusement. Such speculations, whether spontaneous or in the form of established legends, do not reveal any consistency in detail, which appears to be a matter of individual imagination, but there are broad areas of belief that seem widespread among both archers and net-hunters.

There is a belief in a power greater than the Mbuti themselves and not of the natural order of the world they see and know around them. Insofar as this is stated to be a belief, and not knowledge, it may be considered a spiritual power, the spirit being a level of existence that the Mbuti do not claim to understand but which they see as necessarily existing in order to explain the nature of the world's unknowns. Again the terminology is hopelessly confused, the Epulu Mbuti using, in one instance, no less than five terms interchangeably—*pepo, keti, boru, roho, satani.* These terms are drawn from Lesé, Bira, Ndaka and Ngwana, among which tribes of villagers they are also to some extent interchanged, each change bringing a different shade of meaning. For the Mbuti they do not indicate clearly differentiated elements that make up the physical and spiritual being of man, but rather indicate this basic belief that man himself is in part spiritual and that his life derives not from the flesh but from some other source. All five terms are used equally to denote this personal force. But each one is also used to denote different aspects of that force, and the Mbuti usage again in no way coincides with that of the villagers,

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nor does the usage of one band necessarily coincide with the usage of another band.

The divers aspects of spiritual power that are generally recognized are as follows:

Each man and each animal (and according to most Mbuti, even the inanimate and vegetable worlds) is endowed to a greater or lesser extent with such power.

This power derives from a single source whose physical manifestation is the forest itself. Opinion differs as to whether this means the vegetable forest, or the forest totality, including the Mbuti themselves. Again there is a multiplicity of names to represent this single power source, and it is most easily translated simply as "the forest" (*ndura*), for this is ultimately how the Mbuti themselves describe it.

Also deriving from the prime source of spiritual power are certain disembodied spirits which, like the Mbuti, inhabit the forest. Their existence, for all practical purposes, does not impinge upon that of the Mbuti; they have no power to harm or help, though there is a vague belief that there might be a conflict of interests at times, and any unexplained mishap may be explained in this way. The disembodied spirits are generally thought of as living much the same kind of existence as the Mbuti, for as they themselves say, what other kind of existence can there be in the forest? Thus, someone who trips while chasing an animal may say he collided with a *keti* (the term used by the Epulu Mbuti for this disembodied spirit as well as for the more generalized spiritual power) who was chasing the same animal. The mysterious absence of game in an unhunted area is explained by saying that the *keti* must have hunted it out. But there is no sense of competition or rivalry, and the *keti* are thought about only when such explanations are needed.

The Mbuti also believe in individual personality, which is essentially of the body rather than of the spirit, but which is enhanced and activated by the spirit. This enables individuals to speak with conviction and to justify their actions or thoughts by saying that their "heart" is pleased, for the heart is generally considered the location of this personality, which when displeased jumps and leaps about inside the chest.

The same five terms, all of which may be used to denote the general concept of personal force, do, however, also have individual and particular meanings by which we can perceive something more of the system of belief of the Epulu Mbuti.

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PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the *molimo* trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role,

[1] On two occasions I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try. He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However, insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong" hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not something actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

BORU

A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the departure of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may escape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath, it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as requiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understandable, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so graphically depicts.

ROHO

[illegible]

SATANI (*also* Shaitani)

[illegible]

THE GODHEAD

[illegible]

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tence of a belief in such a spiritual being, and its nature as being generally that of "the forest." From the foregoing description of the two levels of existence, human and *keti*, and of the generally accepted principle of spiritual animation, it is plain that there should be a source of such spiritual force. The mobility of the Mbuti, the composite nature of the bands and the frequency of interchange between bands all lead to a confused scattering of the various terms that appear in the village religious systems. I have been utterly unable to discern any pattern in which the godhead is divided into entities concerned with different aspects of Mbuti life, each with a distinct name; e.g., a god of the hunt known by one name, a god of the bush known by another, and so forth. Even within any one band it seemed singularly clear that there is only one godhead, though different individuals in that band may well use different names.[2] The forest *is* that godhead (*ndura nde kalisia*, or *ndura nde mungu*), rather than being thought of merely as its abode; hence the sanctity of the forest, and the profanity of anything that is not of the forest. That this is so is seen in the almost universal answer given when faced, either among themselves in the course of discussion or directly, by the question of where *pepo* derives from. The answer is that it derives from the forest itself (*pepo a kidi suba ndura*). Not just the trees or streams, or the sky or the soil, but from the totality, down to the last grain of sand.

We have shown earlier how the Mbuti frequently sing and shout to the forest, addressing it as "father" or "mother." They also sometimes address it as "friend," or even "lover." They are perfectly well able to explain this, for they say that "the forest is everything"

[2] Schebesta (1952, 303) says that the Basua (net-hunters) refer to the divinity as *mungu*, *keti*, *kalisia*, and *songé*. I have found all these terms used, but without any different significance in the forest context, while they each have a special and separate significance among the villagers. The important point is that Schebesta recognizes that the divinity "loves" the Mbuti, who owe everything to him, while the villagers are afraid of him. Here I believe Schebesta to have come across the forest as it is considered by the Mbuti in the evening *molimo*, the source of all good. In discussing the archer concept of the divinity, Schebesta (1952, 305–6) refers to the different visualizations they have of *toré*, frequently ugly, noisy and menacing. I found these same interpretations of *toré* among the archers, but always in reference to the other aspect of the forest, not as the mother provider but as the father lawgiver. Among the net-hunters, when the morning *molimo* comes into camp to wreak havoc, it is greeted with cries of *e téré, e téré*, it being openly agreed that this was a form of the archer word *toré* and referred only to this aspect of the *molimo*. But my informants would add, "It is all the same thing, it is all the forest." Schebesta's description of *toré* not only corresponds to a different aspect of the Mbuti *molimo*, but it also corresponds closely to the description given by Vergiat (1936, 53–7) of the "génie de la brousse" among the Ubangi villagers, to the northwest. Here, as by the Lesé/Efe, that divinity is described as a grotesque caricature of an Mbuti, fearful to all villagers but strangely friendly to the Mbuti hunters.

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(*ndura nde bokbu*), and if pressed begin to enumerate the totality of their experience. Primarily, however, they refer to the forest as mother or father, according to context. On the hunt the men address it as father, the women as mother. A man receiving a sudden unexpected favor, as he sees it (coming across a cache of highly prized mushrooms), is apt to address the forest as mother. A woman who is having a hard time finding the leaves or saplings she wants will, getting into a tangle of undergrowth, almost certainly start addressing the forest as father and accuse it of being far too severe and strict. The terms are so widely and frequently used that I have no means of saying which is the more prevalent. If anything, I would hazard a guess that "mother" is used more often than "father." The Mbuti themselves say that which term they use and when is a matter for their *roho*.

The extent to which the Mbuti personify the forest is seen when in explanation they say that the forest gives them not only food and shelter, warmth and clothing, but also affection (*ndura pisasu bendu, pisasu isa, pisasu ngombe; ndura ekondisu*). The intimacy of the relationship between the individual Mbuti and his forest godhead is most plainly seen in the incident described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 15), where a youth was found dancing all by himself in the moonlight, singing a wordless song as he danced. When questioned as to why he was dancing alone, he answered, "I am not dancing alone, I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon."[3]

3 *Kanga me bi akilé: me bi na ndura, me bi na songé.*

Schebesta (1952, 303) refers to *songé* (moon) as being one of the net-hunting names for God, regarded as the creator of all things (1952, 305), particularly of man, which *songé* creates by means of menstrual blood. He does not, unfortunately, give more information or documentation on this interpretation, but there is no doubt that the moon is, to the Mbuti, an object of interest and (as seen above) affection, and at the same time in common discussion they do connect the moon with menstruation, and menstruation with fertility. I have myself not come across any instance of the moon being worshipped as such, unless this moonlight dance be regarded as worship, except in one song of the *molimo*, the words of which were:

Ema songé, ema, ema; okisu ema; pika'i.
Mother moon, mother, mother, hear us mother; come.

This is remarkably similar to a translation given by Bowra (1962, 70) of a song of the Gabon pygmies cited by Trilles (1945, 157).

Moon, O mother moon, O mother moon,
mother of living things,
Hear our voice, O mother moon!
O, mother moon, O mother moon,
Keep away the spirits of the dead,
Hear our voice, O mother moon,
O mother moon, O mother moon.

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This was not an isolated instance, though such dancing and singing are generally confined to youths and younger married people. The erotic aspect of the relationship between forest and Mbuti is also seen in the very clear individual preferences for certain types of place in which it is found good to the *roho* to have sexual intercourse, such as by a stream, or in dark shade, or in a patch of sunlight or moonlight, or during the hunt, but in the forest rather than in the hut.

The perennial certainty of economic sufficiency, the general lack of crisis in their lives, all lead the Mbuti to the conviction that the forest, regarded as the source of *pepo* and of their whole existence, is benevolent, and that the natural course of life is good. The absence of magic is not necessarily an indication of technological mastery; in this instance it is simply an indication of the normal absence of crisis. We indicated that such magic as existed was not without its spiritual aspects, and might possibly be better classified as religion. For instance the use of vine and wooden charms on an infant to convey the strength of the forest to the child is not thought to achieve its end directly, by physical transference alone. Physical contact with these materials is considered strengthening, and certainly the juice of the vine in which infants are bathed is thought to have strengthening properties, but these things are also considered "pleasing to the forest" (*babongisa ndura*). This phrase constantly recurs, and shows the belief in the awareness by the forest of its "children" and their needs. Such acts and many others, by physically relating the individual to the forest, are believed to create an added awareness of the Mbuti by the forest. It is not only the strength of the forest that is wanted, but its affection.

THE POWER OF SOUND

Birth is attended with an undemonstrative concern to establish this relationship between the forest and the individual, and it is reinforced at puberty by what might also be considered in some respects as magic, but which is more essentially religious, and that is song. The mere attachment of a vine to the wrist or around the waist requires that amount of effort and no more. Song requires continued effort, is more direct and personal, and consequently more powerful—its goal is identical. Song above all else is believed to attract the attention of the forest, and to please it. "Sound is very strong indeed; noise is bad, but song is good" (*S'uti mota ningo'e, akami sinand'e;*

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imba nde bonga'i). The positive emphasis on *ekimi*,[4] or quiet, is in no way thought of as being in conflict with song, for *ekimi* is cool, and so is song, and both are pleasing to the forest. Song is in no way associated with noise, though both are recognized to be sound.

There is no such thing as secular song among the Mbuti. Songs sung by the Mbuti in the village, apart from being quite different in musical form from those sung in the forest, are spoken of as "empty sound" (*s'uti bobo*) or even as "noise." There are distinct musical forms for distinct occasions of importance in forest life such as hunting, honey gathering, puberty and death. The absence of any specific Mbuti form for village events, including *nkumbi* initiation or village-arranged marriages, is an indication of the lack of importance of these events in the forest life of the Mbuti.

There are, apart from the four major types of song listed above, two other types that are less formalized, but which are considered more in the nature of "sound" than "song." One is the lullaby, which is an individual creation (unlike any other forms of song, all of which require group participation), and the other is the play song, accompanying hoop-jumping, skipping or divers other rhythmic games.

Of the four major types, two concern economic activities and are sung on the appropriate occasion, each involving men and women. The other two are more directly religious in nature, being concerned with puberty and death, though the field of each is somewhat wider than these precise moments in the life cycle. The puberty songs (which have nothing to do with the *nkumbi*, not being sung on that occasion and in no way resembling the village songs that *are* sung at that time) concern primarily the women and youths (male and female), and are first learned and sung at puberty but may be sung at other times similarly critical to growth, birth and marriage. (Normally *elima* songs, or puberty songs, are sung at birth only if there is some special concern over the child's welfare, and at marriage only if it is desired to consecrate an otherwise "empty" marriage taking place in the village. Then not only is an *elima* song sung but leaves are brought in from the forest, and the bridal couple are completely surrounded by them to indicate that they are, in fact, joining together in the forest.)

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or

[4] *Ekimi* is the word most frequently used in this band for quiet. Like many other words it is a dialectal form, in this case of the Ngwana word *kimia*. In KiBira the equivalent would be *kobia*.

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ful analysis by competent musicologists.[6] As described, the above divisions represent divisions recognized by the Mbuti, and visible in differences of musical form. There is sometimes an additional category stated, that of the elephant-hunting song, which seems to overlap both the ordinary hunting song (specifically referred to by the Epulu Mbuti as a net-hunting song) and the *molimo* song. In view of the possible elephant symbolism in the *molimo* festival, this could be of importance, though not enough is known at the moment of the elephant-hunting song to properly assess its position in the system. In this respect it should also be remembered that the Ngwana term *esumba*, or *lusumba*, frequently used by the Mbuti in the forest context as synonymous with their *molimo*, was originally for the Ngwana in the nature of elephant-hunting magic.

All songs share the same essential nature, sharing the same power of sound. The sound "awakens" the forest, in Mbuti terminology, and the nature of the song indicates the particular area of interest of the Mbuti at that moment, thus attracting the forest's attention to the immediate needs of its children. It is also of the essential nature of all songs that they should be "pleasing to the forest."[7]

Rather more magical in nature, perhaps, is the way the Mbuti use other forms of sound than song. A sudden noise of any kind is considered "strong," and generally bad; an isolated hand or arm clap, or a single loud shout, will bring complete silence to a camp or to a hunt. Whistling is considered very "strong" indeed, but here the word

[6] It is interesting to note here the elephant-hunting significance of the Ngwana *esumba* ritual, and the linguistic confusion between *esumba* and *molimo*. Frequently, I have seen in the forest the remains of what seems like the model of a spear-fall, and have always been told that a *molimo* had been held there. Most often such sites were in old, deserted camps, once or twice (particularly in archer territory) on the trail.

[7] Pahlen (1949) gives an excellent general background to the primitive concept and use of music, though his acceptance of the sounds of nature as symbols of supernatural powers is not demonstrated. He points out (p. 18) how in ancient cultures music went hand in hand with religion, "the synthesis of wisdom, beauty, kindness and solace." He is referring primarily to countries with "highly developed cultures," but much of what he says is applicable to primitive society. It is certain that an acute analysis of Mbuti music would reveal much that parallels the structure of Mbuti society. The extraordinary level of polyphonic achievement is surely related to a highly developed individualism that would hardly tolerate the confines of unison. The Mbuti musical categories of *berai* and *imiai*, chorus and solo song, indicate a system of recognized relationships between the group and the individual, and the technique of *hoquet*, already mentioned, further mirrors social relationships. Such considerations, however, should not obscure Pahlen's major point that music also mirrors social values. It is an analytical tool, requiring little musical training, that has been much neglected by anthropologists, and it is hoped that a systematic analysis of Mbuti music now being undertaken at Columbia University will provide data from which not only may further light be shed on Mbuti society, but from which may emerge the beginnings of an ethno-musicological methodology.

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"strong" has the same double meaning that it has when used to describe song. In using either the Ngwana term (*nguvu*) or the Bira term (*mota*), the Mbuti may imply difficulty as well as sheer physical strength. A sudden noise that is *mota* has an inherent power of its own. A song or whistle has power only if it is properly performed. The proper performance is not so much the following of a prescribed pattern, though there may be and usually is such a pattern, if general, but rather the transference of *pepo* so that by contact with *pepo* the song or the whistle becomes *mota*. Singing or whistling not so touched with *pepo* is "empty noise," and doubly bad. Whistling is widely used to arrest action of any kind. In everyday life, whistling brings the movement of all hunters and beaters to an immediate stillness and stops all sound among them. The sign for them to continue is an imitated animal cry. In the camp, if someone thinks he hears a foreign sound—of approaching people or game, of a "crying" tree (a tree starts creaking some days before it falls, and this is referred to as "crying")—he whistles to call for silence so that all may listen and hear. During the *molimo* songs, particularly, but during any song, also, whistling softly brings the song to an end. A sudden storm is likely to bring shrill whistles, though nobody claims to even hope for them to stop the storm, though they all say it is worth trying. They explain that whistling is effective in other realms because it is the affair of the Mbuti, but it will not stop a storm because that is the affair of the forest.[8]

All such whistling is done with the lips. Whistles are also made of seeds and carved from wood, however, and though the seed-whistles are purely for children to play with, the wooden whistles (*piki*, *segbe*) have special usages. Rarely, a small whistle may be attached to a net, and although functional it is never blown. Similar whistles are used by those net-hunters who build a hunting fire in the camp, and are placed within the vine circle surrounding the fire, again not blown. Larger whistles made of two semicylindrical sections of wood and bound together by vine or *nkusa* twine, tapering to a point at one end (left open so it can be stopped with a finger) and notched for blowing at the other end, are sometimes attached to a fur cap worn by hunters, and may be blown before the hunt, possibly during a hunting dance. Similar whistles made of *angbe* wood, from the *angbe* tree that provides most of the honey, are used during the honey season

[8] Cooper (1941, 24 seq.), in drawing comparisons between the Semang, Andamanese, and Eta, finds much similar interest in noise.

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"to call the bees" (in the sense of attracting their attention, not of summoning them). The belief is that these whistles will halt the game or the bees, so that they may be found more easily.

All such whistling, whether by lip or by *piki*, is done by men. Women rarely whistle, though they may do so to the same end as the men. If they do, it is considered all the more *mota*.

It could easily be explained by the Mbuti that the sound itself paralyzes the animals or the bees, and has this direct effect (and could so be more properly called magical), but they deny this strongly and say that the forest hears the *piki* and leads them to the bees or the game (or alternatively that the forest holds the bees and the game still for its children to find them).

In ordinary conversation, sounds are widely used to convey different ideas, a snap of the fingers indicating that the action being described was done suddenly, a high-pitched, drawn-out exhalation indicating it was done slowly. Wherever possible, the narrative is illustrated by imitations of the sound of the action described. Vowel sounds, unformed into words, are used in conversation similarly to heighten ideas, convey added emotion, to supply an element that would otherwise be missing and which is plainly of great importance to the Mbuti. For the forest is nearly always full of sound, and the Mbuti refer to this constant background by saying "the forest is talking" (*ndura a lufu*). The Mbuti listen, and interpret, and make use of what they hear. If the forest stops "talking," then it is a sign that something is very wrong and alerts the Mbuti to imminent danger.

It is not surprising, then, that sound so carefully controlled as song should be considered as *mota nengo*, *mota ngbekbekbei*, the "strongest" possible kind of sound, activated by the breath that is so mysteriously connected with *pepo*. Song is used to communicate with the forest, and it is significant that the emphasis is on the actual sound, not on the words. Frequently the mere vowel sounds are used, sometimes imitative of animals, birds or bees but more often simply to suit the melodic line of the song. When words are used they are most often trivial, and may be spontaneous and highly sketchy references to one or another event of the day. That the song is directed at the forest, and intended to awaken the forest, is most clearly seen in the *molimo* festivals, which are the Mbuti reaction to crisis. The *molimo* is named for the festival, for the society that performs the festival, and for the central and solitary piece of paraphernalia, the trumpet that echoes the song of the Mbuti on into the depths of the forest.

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THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness. But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry
752 for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many
757 remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite. So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event leading to the greater *molimo*.

• 778 In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the
[224] Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If
[75] bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation, then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or
718 ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire
796 and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest
533 to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the
[782] Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as being good, though it may not be understood.

796 Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not
[533] accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*,
[535] nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and
[765] there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo* is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will be done by youths only, and be casual and mildly erotic. Above all there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet.

All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although
[626] there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the greater molimo.

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greater *molimo*. In the case of a hunting *molimo*, the initiative is taken by the younger hunters, who sit together around a fire and simply begin singing. In the case of sickness, the initiative is taken by the adult men of the family concerned if the sick person is a child, and if the sick person is an adult the *molimo* will be initiated by his or her male age mates.

The hunting inevitably gets better sooner or later, and the lesser *molimo*, once begun, will continue until it does. But sickness may develop into death, in which case there will be an immediate change of camp, following an uncomplicated and informal burial, and the commencement of the greater *molimo*.

THE GREATER *MOLIMO* (*molimo mangbo*)

In a previous account (Turnbull, 1960, pp. 307–340), the general procedure of the greater *molimo* was outlined, and it was indicated that there is no set rule as to when a greater *molimo* should be held. Certainly it is not held for every death within the band, not even for every adult death. It may, on the other hand, be held for a child. It is largely a question of *roho*, and this is determined by a number of considerations such as the nature of the death, the importance of the deceased to the band, and the general tenor of life in the band at that moment, particularly the condition of hunting. A combination of poor hunting and ill humor and general sickness, associated with the death of a child, even of a stranger child temporarily within the band, may well occasion a *molimo*, for the total combination indicates that the forest is "sleeping" (*é langé toro*). On the other hand, the death of a great hunter, through his own fault or through sickness but at a time of good hunting and general contentment, may pass unmarked except by the usual summary burial and change of camp, all expression of grief being confined to the immediate family concerned.

One other consideration not without importance is the fact that whoever initiates a *molimo* festival undertakes a responsibility that may become a burden. He has to see that everyone cooperates in providing food, and when, as sometimes happens, the response is meager, he has somehow to provide enough himself for the society's evening repast. As a greater *molimo* is not likely to last under a month, except possibly for a child under circumstances which otherwise become quickly improved, the economic burden is one to cause careful consideration.

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An occasion such as that described (Turnbull, *ibid.*) for old Balekimito would lead to a greater *molimo* without any hesitation, however, for the death of this much loved old lady affected everyone's *roho*. On the other hand, the *molimo* held for Cephu's daughter Teresa was initiated by Njobo, Cephu claiming he did not have a trumpet. It was held not so much out of respect for the girl but because conditions were bad at the time, there being much sickness and discontent. However, Cephu did not seem to be pulling his own weight, economically, and so the festival came to an abrupt end after only a week. If people found their *roho* upset at all, that was more because of Cephu's cupidity than because of the death of his daughter.

To recapitulate the essential elements of the greater *molimo*, as held for Balekimito:

Death is accepted as a natural event and does not lead to any accusations of witchcraft or sorcery, except in the village context. Such grief as is expressed is genuine, and not formal, again except in the village context. It is accepted with regret, and although regarded as natural and inevitable, there is nonetheless a feeling that this is the one really imperfect thing in Mbuti life. The expressed belief that death comes when the forest is sleeping does not quite tally with the factual acceptance of death by the Mbuti, but there is absolutely no feeling of resentment or blame attached to the forest because of death. The felt need to "awaken" the forest and to "rejoice" the forest is occasioned more by the fact that all the living have been brought closer to death and have, to some extent, been touched by it. They consequently need reassurance, not only for the continuation of their own lives but for the continuity of the Mbuti.

The factual attitude to death is seen in the practice of burial, which in the forest is performed as simply and quickly as possible. It is prolonged and attended by ritual only in the village context (see p. 74 *seq.*, 143). Burial is primarily the concern of the immediate nuclear family, who may be assisted by friends or relatives. Too much display of grief is considered very bad, and one of the major concerns of the ensuing *molimo* is to reaffirm life. In a sense, then, the *molimo* is more properly associated with life, occasioned though it may be by death.

The burial over, the camp is abandoned and the mourners are at once under an even stricter obligation to minimize their demonstrations of grief. The opening of the *molimo* festival is informal and casual, and depends on how long it takes for the new camp to get set-

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tled, how good the weather is, and whether or not visiting relatives or friends are expected. Within a few days, however, the festival will begin, and from the moment of its inception its stated concern is to awaken and, even more important, to rejoice the forest. The lesser *molimo* is more often spoken of as "awakening" the forest (*su kongi ndura*), though that too has to be done in a way that will rejoice it. The greater *molimo* should ideally be a festival of sheer joy. The course of the festival becomes more and more a symbolic triumph of life over death, the death of the individual being recognized in the final dramatic stamping out of the *molimo* fire, the fire of life. This is not done, however, until time and time again the fire has been attacked in an effort to destroy it, but has been regenerated by the dances of the men, who in a dance that imitates the act of copulation, with the fire as their partner, fan the scattered fire back into a blaze of life.

It is normally the old woman, who is an integral part of every greater *molimo*, who either by herself or with a girl attacks the fire, dancing through it and scattering it all around. Thus the woman who gives birth to life also seeks to destroy it. She is referred to by no title other than "mother," the same term of address used for the forest in its capacity as giver of life and death. It is primarily the young men who hastily rebuild the fire and fan it back into a blaze with their dance of life. It is frequently said that the women used to possess the *molimo*, but it was stolen from them by the men, and this dance, together with the tying up of the men by the old lady (Turnbull, *ibid.*, p. 323), may well represent in part this early conflict, and the attempt of the women to regain possession of the *molimo*. Whatever the symbolism, it is nowhere clearly stated by the Mbuti, each individual claiming to see something different in the performance. It is generally agreed, however, that it shows how strong the women are, and that they have to be respected by men.

Whether or not there is thought to be any correlation with *pepo* (breath), the power of breath to fan sparks into fire is demonstrated when coals are placed in the end of the *molimo* trumpet. The singer blows as he sings, and the sparks that fly out of the end of the trumpet are greeted by murmurs or even shouts of acclaim.

The trumpet is sometimes referred to as an "animal" of the forest, though this is generally in connection with its morning appearance. Nonetheless it is referred to as needing food and water, and these it symbolically receives. It is also passed through the *molimo* fire and

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765 534 778 It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as sacred in itself, hidden though it may be. There was one instance when a trumpet was stolen by a member of a different family and a different band, simply because it had such a good "voice" and could sing so well. Whatever power it possesses it is believed to possess through the quality of its "voice." The fact that it can be stolen or lost (they sometimes get washed away in the floods that follow a particularly torrential downpour), without causing any ritual crisis, is in keeping with the lack of concern for inheritance of the trumpet. It is said by youths that anyone who wants to make one can have it, but that if they do not want to be bothered they need not, for "the *molimo* is a lot of work." Elders, however, say clearly that there used [43] to be one for each family, and by family they plainly defined a minimal lineage, all male members descended from a single living grandfather or from the same father, living or dead.

765 534 [611] [194] The fact that they also say that the *molimo* used to be the concern of the band only, perhaps indicates an earlier but now less pronounced emphasis on the principle of patrilineal descent; be that as it may, a noted feature of *molimo* festivals today is their utterly nonlineal nature (Tables 9 and 10).[2] With reference to the greater *molimo* held for Balekimito, there were at one time three *molimo* trumpets in action, only one of which belonged to a member of Balekimito's lineage, the second belonging to her son, the third to Kokoyo, whose wife's stepmother's brother was married to a woman of the same clan as Balekimito—a rather distant claim to lineage—but Kokoyo and Ekianga brought out their *molimo* trumpets because their *roho* wanted it. [621] Thus, by this means they emphasized the importance not of lineage membership but of membership of the band, and the *molimo*, as of old, was at least a band festival, if not a lineage festival.

765 621 771 778 181 182 A more systematic analysis in the next chapter shows the importance of the *molimo* festival as an integrating factor in Mbuti life, and indeed the importance of their whole religious system, based as it is upon a belief in the benevolence of a forest spirit or power. It can, for the moment, be seen clearly enough that it expresses among other things the latent antagonisms that exist between the sexes, because of the same lack of clear, formal sex delineations that characterize the *molimo* itself. It also unites the band (regardless of kinship considerations) in a common expression of the dependence of the Mbuti upon the forest, not only as an economic entity but also as a spiritual entity, a spiritual power that looks after their needs but which is also able to inflict hardship and punishment. The *molimo* heightens

[1] [see page 331 -- Analysis]

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the practical economic dependency of the Mbuti upon the forest, which is felt and acknowledged, by forcing an acknowledgment of the most basic dependency of all, that of life and death. The association with the festival of all the basic elements—fire, water, air and earth—and the central importance of food and sex, all combine to create a highly direct, personal and intimate relationship between the Mbuti and the forest, while at the same time binding them together as a band, the one individual dependent upon the next.

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is essential, and gathering, though done mostly by women, may also be done by men when opportunity affords. Perhaps the most significant activity that is generally performed by women is that of house-building. The only men I have seen build their own houses have been bachelors or widowers, and even then they will frequently get women to do this for them. The woman builds the house; she has the final say in selecting the site. She is in charge of the family hearth, where the cooking is done and around which the family eats and sleeps. Her husband may eat with other men at the central hearth, so the family fire may be said to be of major importance to her and her children. And it is precisely at the parental level that the personal terminology differentiates the sexes.

Looking for significant differences in attitudes and relationships between a child and its mother and father, it is plain that the mother is regarded as the source of food, despite the fact that the father is the prime force in the hunt. It might be worth mentioning again here that vegetable foods (entirely discounting village influence) form the bulk of any forest diet, and their nutritive value is probably equal at least to that of the game consumed. In any case, the father gives the game and any vegetables he may have gathered to his wife, who cooks the food and distributes it. A hungry child looks to any one of his classificatory mothers for food, not to his fathers. His most likely chance of finding it will be at the hearth of his nuclear family, but any mother is under as strong an obligation to feed him as the mother from whose stomach he came.

There is no doubting the difference in the emotional connotations of *ema* and *eba*, differences that are not found to exist in attitudes to the sexes at other age levels. *Ema* (mother) is associated with love (*ekondi*); *eba* (father) is associated with authority (*mota*). We have referred a number of times to the habit of the Mbuti addressing the forest as *ema* and *eba*, and although I can adduce no body of evidence to indicate on what occasions it is addressed by which term, it would seem to reflect the attitude of the individual at the moment of address, and the frequency with which the forest is addressed, as both indicate something of great importance in understanding the Mbuti value system, upon which social order so largely depends. The forest is not only the provider, it is also the ruler; it is to be regarded with affection and respect, and under all circumstances to be trusted.[3]

[3] Schebesta (1952, 340) asserts: "*Les noms attribués à Dieu relèvent de deux catégories. Ou bien on l'invoque simplement sous ceux d'afa*, bapapa, odu . . . *père, grand-*

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601 602 Another important aspect of the terminology is that it does not differentiate between cognates and affines, and is used to include all, without any distinction of this kind. In an Mbuti hunting band, a hunter may well have a uterine brother hunting to one side of him and his uterine sister's husband to the other side. He depends on each equally for both success and for safety, and any preferential behavior, such as might be signified in another form of terminology, must be avoided. To distinguish between cognates and affines in the daily hunting and camp life of the Mbuti, as to distinguish between matrikin and patrikin, or even between kith and kin, on any grounds except age and locality, is not only needless, it is destructive of the sense of unity that is vital to the close cooperative nature of Mbuti economic and political life.

601 602 571 621 Mbuti personal terminology, as in the more conventional kinship systems, equally reflects interpersonal bonds, then, but they clearly cut across all strictly kinship considerations. This can to some extent be construed as a denial of kinship ties, and it certainly implies that such ties do not form the basis of social organization in the band. But it is better expressed as a lack of concern for kinship that, whatever its origins, is particularly well suited to one of the band's major objectives, the preservation of the greatest possible political distance between itself and the village. It will be readily seen that whereas lineage considerations would divide the Mbuti, the generational system, if considered vertically, effects the widest possible classificatory unity from which the villagers are absolutely excluded. But for the moment to keep to the forest context, the same unity is in perfect consonance with the nonlineal nature of the band, the unity of which any lineal system would destroy. Here we have to refer to one other usage of the same personal terminology; namely, when the Mbuti refer to themselves as *bamiki ba ndura*, the children of the forest. This, together with their habitual reference to the forest as mother and father, extends the nuclear-family model to incorporate the larger

601 152 778 *père, père des pères; ou bien on se sert de termes qui remontent à certaines représentations mythiques, et dont le nombre est très élevé.*" ("Names attributed to the Godhead fall into two categories. Either one simply invokes the name *afa, bapapa* or *odu* . . . father, grandfather, or father of fathers . . . or else one uses terms that derive from mythological beings, of which there are a very great number.")

This indicates the same filial attitude to the forest that I found among the net-hunters. Among the archers, I myself most frequently heard *afa*, used with the same degree of affection as *ema* or *eba*. However, among the archers I equally often heard the forest (God) addressed as *ema* (mother), rarely heard *bapapa*, and never *odu*. My participation in the religious life of archer bands, however, was limited.

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group—be it the sub-band, the band, or even the total Mbuti population—as a politico-economic unity. The situation is somewhat analogous to the more common lineal patterns, where a people see their ultimate unity in descent from a common ancestor; the Mbuti find their unity in their common dependence upon the forest.

Taking care not to become involved in issues of causality, we can now see the structural implications of this lack of concern with actual kinship, for it alone makes possible not only the nonlineal nature of the band but the fluidity of its composition. But here we have to introduce another factor, the absence of which would lead to the rapid disintegration of the corporate nature of the band. In the absence of the continuity provided by any kinship system, particularly under the condition of flux we have described for this Mbuti band, continuity and corporateness are seen in terms of territory. We have pointed out that the band can be defined only in terms of territory, the individuals forming that band changing from month to month; perhaps even this is implied in the personal terminology which, as seen, differentiates the sexes only at the parental level in terms of the family hearth—the most basic territorial unit of all.

The system also indicates a lack of concern with problems of superordination and subordination. Even problems are resolved in the forest context by the use of relative age. Their resolution is only truly difficult in one vital context, once again the forest-village relationship. It is consistent with the essentially egalitarian nature of Mbuti social behavior, and it successfully avoids lending any support to the assumption of individual authority on grounds of lineal seniority, which authority would again destroy the essential cooperative unity of the band.

The non-lineal nature of the band itself calls for some explanation, and now we are in a better position to understand it, for we can see clear structural elements that are only obscured when seeking to find principles of band organization in terms of kinship. The terminological system reflects as neatly as could any diagram the essential principle of age. This is the one factor it emphasizes above all others, except the common Mbuti unity as *bamiki ba ndura* (children of the forest). We have seen throughout our description of Mbuti forest life how activity and responsibility are regulated according to age level, and the terminology clearly indicates where one's loyalties lie. Such loyalties are entirely incompatible in so small a cooperative society with

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patterns produce "features typical of the patrilineal band," for the patterns differ from group to group, and within each group from one time of the year to the next. At one time or another, each group, net-hunters or archers, will be able to present bands that resemble patrilineal units; at other times the same bands will be utterly nonlineal, even though the exploitative pattern may not have changed.

Nonetheless, the environment itself does play a vital structural role, and while not necessarily determining the exploitative activity, or the dependence of the Mbuti upon it, is determinant of their value system so long as that dependence is felt. For, feeling that way, regarding the forest as *ema* the provider, and as *eba* the ruler, believing that any deviation from the way of life ordained for them by the forest would be fatal, the Mbuti effect what control they can over their lives by a constant effort to "rejoice the forest."

Conceiving that the forest is intelligent, the Mbuti conceive that it is like them, and consequently the ideal that they hold for themselves is the ideal they attribute to the forest. While age and territory are effective in organizing the band, dividing it into significant units, binding it together as a whole, and determining the general nature of interpersonal relationships, the territory enlarged into the forest seen as mother and father acts as the ultimate sanction of all behavior. There are certain recognized forms of behavior that lead to a "good" band, and others that lead to a "bad" band. The appropriate positive and negative sanctions are formulated in such a way that all actions are either pleasing to the forest—leading to the ideal of *ekimi*, or quietness—or displeasing to the forest, leading to *akami*, or noise. (*Ekimi* and *akami* are, in practice, essential elements in determining the success or failure of the hunt.)

Thus it is recognized that cooperation is essential for the success of the hunt, so it is stated that laziness and aggressiveness and disputatiousness are all displeasing to the forest, leading to *akami* (as indeed they do). The *akami* is their own reward, for *akami* destroys the hunt and "kills" the Mbuti. On the contrary, to hunt well, to have a full stomach, to sing and dance, is to please the forest and lead to *ekimi*, or "quietness," and *ekimi* in turn brings good hunting, and is associated with singing and dancing and feasting.

Here is a very clear example of the closest possible association between religious belief and ethical behavior. The distinction made by Radcliffe-Brown (1952, p. 172) between law, morality and religion, upheld by legal sanctions, sanctions of public opinion, and religious

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sanctions, does not hold good for Mbuti society, where the three principles are inextricably fused. One might be able to talk of law, even if law implies sanction by force, for the Mbuti believe that the forest has such power and force and will use it. Indeed, in their experience it does, for transgression is met with the force of *akami*, which kills. This is thought of as a very direct and practical response on the part of the forest as the law. On the other hand, public opinion can hardly be said to exist, for there is no public spokesman, and every opinion on behavior is expressed in terms of pleasing or displeasing the forest. Such public action as may be taken—ridicule or ostracism—is taken in the name of the forest. Exile is literally being sent to the forest to meet it directly. Religious sanctions are not differentiated from any others; the threat is the same—noise and displeasure.

Ultimately, then, in our consideration of territory, despite the obvious practical values involved and a certain extent of ecological determination of behavior patterns, the territory as a principle of organization must be regarded as a religious principle. Indeed, life itself, for the Mbuti, can almost be regarded as a ritual designed to please the forest and secure *ekimi*. There is, as noted, an almost total absence of magic, and the only ritual that can be truly considered as such, and is not otherwise a necessary daily activity, is song. We have seen that song is designed specifically to rejoice the forest, and to draw its attention to its children, but beyond this and its reinforcement, through musical technique, of the values of age and cooperation, there is nothing particularly remarkable about it as a social institution.

It is only when we come to death that there is a marked departure from the normal tenor of life, and a ritual, the *molimo*, that might be regarded as a ritual in the Durkheimean sense of recreating society and reaffirming the social sentiment. While any interpretation of religious ritual of this kind is highly questionable, the attempt has to be made.

Leaving aside the "legal" aspect of the *molimo* when it appears in the early hours of the morning to wreak havoc in the camp, there are few rituals that could be more explicitly concerned with the "recreation of society" in the most literal sense. Death is the most final and inescapable of all crises, and for it there is no remedy. But it threatens more than the life of the individual; it threatens the continuity of the band, and so threatens the ritual of life by which the forest is pleased. Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted

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Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted with regret, but there is enormous concern to conceal the regret and avoid any excessive show of grief, for crying is *akami*. The uncomfortable fact of death has to be obliterated from the memory as quickly and effectively as possible, and the band, which has received a blow at its strength, must be rejuvenated in an exaggerated display of all the things pleasing to the forest—good hunting, singing, dancing, feasting and, above all, *ekimi*. More than this, the *molimo*, as we have seen, is a means of reaffirming the effective division of the band into age groups, and through both the participation of the old lady, who demonstrates the power of the women over the men, and through the *ekokomea* dance, the lack of sex differentiation is emphasized. *Ekokomea* may also be regarded in a similar light as the erotic dance over the fire, where the men symbolically copulate over the scattered embers, fanning them to life. Certainly the sexual act is represented in the *molimo* dances, if not in the symbolism of the *molimo* trumpet itself and the way in which it is handled, and there is very evidently expressed concern with the regeneration of life.

The *molimo* is also an occasion on which the band reaffirms all its interpersonal loyalties, and its unity as a band, regardless of kinship considerations. (This is not to deny that the band, and the *molimo*, may at one time have had a more definitely lineal structure.) It is significant that it insists on participation by all adult males, including not only affines but adult visitors living temporarily with the band under an obligation, default in which is punishable by death. Such death itself is said to be brought by the *molimo*; informants differed as to *how* death would actually take place—some said by two spears, some by beating—but in all cases it was held that the *molimo* would bring death to any who did not fulfill his obligations.

Thus the forest is intimately associated with the Mbuti at death, just as it is at birth. The same forest that gives life and strength through the juices of the vine, and through the vine and wooden charms tied around an infant's wrist, may bring death to that infant, if as an adult he fails to rejoice the forest during the *molimo* festival.

Fire, which is the gift of the forest, but whose ownership is disputed, is central in the life of the Mbuti, representing life itself. (One legend has it that fire was first owned by a chimpanzee; another by woman; another by the *keti*. In any case, man [Mbuti] ultimately stole it and now possesses it.) During the *molimo*, men pass their hands through the flames and then rub gently over their faces. The *molimo* trumpet is passed over the flames. Sometimes men put coals

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561 88 the elders is to restore *ekimi*, or quietness, and also, following their alternate generation, to play and sing, if in a somewhat different manner. The elders may also flirt.

Above all, each age level has its own responsibility in the total band economy.

621 561 [594] 3. TERRITORY is the principle by which the band, divided horizontally by age, sees its unity vertically, through all four generational levels. Territory, represented by the hearth, recognizes the divisions of the band from the nuclear family, represented by the family hearth, to the four age levels, represented by the different hearths at the *kumamolimo*, for youths, hunters and elders (children remaining by the family hearths). Territory, represented by an area enclosed by recognizable boundaries, defines and is the symbol of unity of the band. In its widest extension, the forest itself, territory forms the basis for the unity of all Mbuti in their common opposition to the village world. The village world is frequently referred to as *indenji aku*, or in the lingua franca, KiNgwana, as *inchi ingina*—directly translated as "another territory." Each band has its own *indenji*, and intermarriage between noncontiguous bands is preferred because of the rights it conveys, each to the other's territory. The Mbuti themselves say it is good to have relatives (friends) in many camps, for then one never "walks emptily" (*tamba bulé*). One of the great *molimo* songs is "*me tamba bulé*"—"I am walking emptily." The importance lies not in the initial or future residence of the married couple, but in the exchange relationship established by their marriage, enabling individuals or families of each band to exchange visits with members of the other, never having to "walk emptily."

621 131 [648] [192] 628 602

621 718 For the Mbuti territory in its widest aspect, as the forest, also represents the spiritual source of their entire being, and effectively operates as the ultimate sanction of social behavior.

822 4. NOISE, or *akami*, is another element of structural significance, and must be considered in relation to its counterpart, *ekimi*—quiet. Noise is recognized as having considerable practical significance, such as its effect in scaring away animals. This can be desirable or undesirable, depending on the situation, and so can noise be desirable or otherwise. Ultimately, however, noise kills, and so generally is to be avoided. It may be used in times of danger or crisis for protective purposes, and apart from shouting to frighten away wild animals while on the trail, the Mbuti also whistle to stop all human sound, in

the camp or on the hunt, and they also sometimes shout at a noise or at rain to drive away bad weather.

But more important than Mbuti recognition of the practical power of noise is their recognition of its social value. When they are in the duty of the hunters age level to make noise, they make just that, even though it is precisely noise that will negate the hunter's other duty, to hunt. The Mbuti do not connect the two duties the one refers to the hunt, the other to camp life. It is in the camp that the hunter is expected to make noise, that is, to be dependent. For the counterwalue, *ekimi*, is only "quiet" and does not refer to silence (*kobowenge*), which is considered as an indication of grave evil or imminent danger. A silent camp is considered a bad camp and the bad aura is destroyed by destroying the silence, which can be done in two ways. One is by singing, which is recognized as sound but only described as noise when it takes place in the village. Singing, as we have seen, is essentially a form of communication, even of communication with the benevolent forest divinity. It destroys silence and "watches the forest" at the same time. But this is recognized as having only temporary efficacy. To strike at the roots of silence, one employs "noise" in the sense of argument, which is certainly its most common connotation.

Silence in a camp betokens unusual ill humor, which is common among the Mbuti when in their village camp, but not in the forest (except when the hunt is spoiled by rain). Disputes seldom remain hidden for long because of the intimate nature of camp life, but no length of time is too long, and when a camp is silent it is inevitably the hunters who find some cause for "making noise." It matters little what they pick on, but it is undeniably not the underlying dispute causing the silence. It may be directed at the cause if personal feelings run high, but then the hunters are criticized for making too much noise, *ekimi mdasi*. Youths and elders will often shout at the hunters and tell them this, but the noise will not die down until the disputants have either come into the open with their dispute, putting it before the band, or have been forced to join together in some common but unrelated cause.

Thus there was an occasion on which Amalowa, for no evident reason, took to beating his wife, Amaliba, with unwonted vigor and regularity. A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back. But Amaliba was aware of the real reason for her husband's behavior, which was her own [illegible]

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deavor of this kind, however, is recognized as being fraught with difficulty, and there is another way that is both easier and more sure, for *ekimi mota* is produced by song. The process of "rejoicing the forest" is a process of creating *ekimi mota* where it does not exist, of intensifying mere *ekimi* through song.

The term for "rejoicing the forest" in the Epulu area is *bongisa ndura*. In KiNgwana the verb is either *furahisa* or *ponisa*, there being no precise equivalent to *bongisa*. *Furahisa* is closer to the English concept of joy, involving festivity; *ponisa*, however, means to cure. The KiNgwana words are both used by the Mbuti in this context, interchangeably, and the meaning of *bongisa* lies between them, derived as it is from *bonga*, meaning good, in an all-inclusive sense.

Perhaps the exact connotation of "rejoicing the forest" is best described by the process itself, which brings joy through joy. Singing gives the Mbuti intense satisfaction. They say it makes them feel good, in the sense of feeling joyful. The mood of song is joyful, even when it is a *molimo* song on the occasion of death. By creating a mood of joy within themselves the Mbuti convey that joy to the forest, which returns it, restoring *ekimi* or even *ekimi mota* to the camp. To describe song as mere "curing" would not quite cover the essential sharing process implied by the term *bongisa ndura*. Song is known, to the Mbuti, to have the infallible power of filling the forest with *ekimi mota*. It is sometimes described as being like the act of copulation in the moonlight, or wherever the individual talking feels that act to be the most intense and beautiful. The Mbuti say "*su bongisa ndura, ndura pisu ekimi*"—"we rejoice the forest, the forest gives us quiet." The distinction is simple, for joy is *ekimi mota*, an intensification of *ekimi*, and as such is not the norm and can only be temporary. Far more important to the Mbuti is that they should have, on a less temporary if less exalted level, the norm of *ekimi*.

While the forest cannot fail to be rejoiced by song, it may well, for one reason or another, be displeased, as a father may be displeased with his children (a perfectly common Mbuti metaphor), and withhold *ekimi* for a long time. The fact that singing brings joy to the Mbuti, filling them with *ekimi mota*, does not mean that it is not also hard work. For the forest is not content with one song. If singing is undertaken at all, and particularly if it is undertaken for purposes of restoring lost *ekimi* (i.e., if it is to be a *molimo* festival), it must be long and continuous. After a fest of singing every night, from shortly after dusk to an hour before sunrise, the Mbuti set off to hunt

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with excessive vigor. It would be an insult as well as *mbafu* (stupidity) to take all the trouble to rejoice the forest by song and then displease it by not having a particularly vigorous hunt. A month of this leaves the stoutest Mbuti more than a little tired, so although the remedy for *akami* lies in their hands, through song, at all times, it can be arduous and, since it is *mota*, it can be dangerous. Thus the supernatural sanction on social behavior is in no way lessened: the Mbuti all state that the forest, in its manifestation through the morning *molimo*, may punish and kill.

The system as described can be seen easily enough to maintain internal order, and it can also be seen well enough how it operates, as an essentially forest-centered system based on age and forest values, to maintain separation from a village system based on kinship and anti-forest values—for one of the cardinal village beliefs is not simply that the village is better than the forest, but that the forest is the source of all evil. But now we have to see how these same elements that make for social order in the forest (the nonlineal band, age, territory, noise and song) operate within the village framework.

Winter (1956) describes the relationship between the eastern extension of the Mbuti, the few who live among the Amba on the Uganda/Congo border, and the Amba themselves. Each group denigrates the other's mode of existence, yet they evidently live in the closest association with each other, in what Winter calls symbiosis. More important, he describes how two Mbuti groups are fitted into the Amba lineage structure, but only partially so. They are both attached to Bulibuli lineages, each to a maximal lineage as a whole; yet they do not share full and equivalent relationships as Bulibuli with the other lineages of the same clan. Winter mentions that they stand in a joking relationship with only one of the maximal lineages.

Joking relationships are generally thought of as pertaining between individuals who stand in a specific relationship to each other, involving both proximity and distance. The proximity is thought of in terms of kinship, the distance is due to a difference, if not a conflict, of interests. The relationship can involve considerable amity and mutual cooperation, but nonetheless contain elements of hostility, particularly in its outer expression (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, p. 91). The exact formularization varies from situation to situation, tolerating or compelling joking behavior, on a symmetrical or asymmetrical basis.

The essential elements of this form of relationship are all present

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the camp is filled with *akami*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.

5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song. Even if they tried, it would be *bulé*. Song being directly associated with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest, and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *akami* and *mota*. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti it is adequate and convenient.

Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition, a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise be the only possible relationship.

The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while operating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that offered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely practiced, though it *is* practiced by elephant hunters, and by some archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

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widely practiced in the mimetic hunting dances, by which it may be supposed that the dancer is trying, magically, to influence the action and movement of the game. In this light the Mbuti acceptance of the *nkumbi* seems more plausible, as a "magical" means of gaining power over the villagers. It is not entirely unlike the situation described by Beattie (1960, p. 78) for Nyoro reactions to foreign powers such as Europeans, Polish expatriates, and airplanes. The Nyoro attempt was to gain some control over the situation by becoming possessed by the spirits of these foreign powers.

There may also be a certain amount of seepage of village beliefs into the Mbuti subconscious, despite the formidable structural opposition they have raised to all such influences. There is certainly cause to think that the village beliefs of witchcraft and sorcery, confused as they are by the Mbuti, nonetheless have for them a certain sinister ring of conviction.[9]

It is perhaps for that reason that the only plainly discernible symbolism evident in Mbuti ritual is concerned with life. Of all the oppositions between the forest and the village, such as abundance/hunger, unity/disunity, moral/immoral, equal/unequal, cool/hot, song/silence, quiet/noise, the most significant are undoubtedly the last two, for silence and noise are associated ultimately with death. If the Mbuti suspect there are, in the village, supernatural powers with which they should come to terms, it is for purposes of defense. And they see their major defense in the power of their own supernatural, the forest.

Their desire is to counteract the forces of hunger, disunity, immorality, inequality, heat, silence and noise, forces that amount to death for the Mbuti. Their focus of attention is on the preservation and continuation of life. The relatively simple ritual, if it can truly be called that, of the *molimo* festival is supercharged with an emotional concern, a burning desire, for life. As might be expected, it reinforces those aspects of Mbuti society that require constant attention: age divisions are clearly symbolized in the three fires for the three upper age groups; the value of sharing (on nonlineal grounds!) is emphasized in the technical division of the songs, again bringing in division along age lines and demanding close cooperation; the reluctance to share is symbolized at the same time as the friction between youths

[9] Again, a linguistic study might help greatly, not only through separating institutions and concepts that derive from different tribes, but in revealing the location of hidden areas of forest/village opposition. Unfortunately we still lack any published studies of KiNgwana, KiBira and KiLesé, let alone of the divers Mbuti groups.

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and very shallow. For the first time we slowed to a walk and stepped through the bubbling water, lifting our feet high so as not to splash. The forest was silent now, except for the evening chorus of crickets and frogs, and on the far side of the stream we halted while Ausu and Makubasi looked around and listened, to reassure themselves that we were alone.

I had no idea of how far we had come or in what direction, but I knew we had left the camp far behind. It was the first time I had known a group of Pygmies to be so silent. Normally, unless hunting, they are deliberately noisy, but now, just at the time that leopards would be prowling about in search of food, they seemed unwilling to disturb the forest or the animals it concealed. Just the opposite, in fact. It was as if they were a part of the silence and the darkness of the forest itself and were only fearful lest any sound might betray their presence to some person or thing *not* of the forest.

They stood there, quiet and still, and it struck me with a sudden shock that not one of them carried a spear or bow and arrow. As they peered into the dusk and cocked their heads first on this side then on that, satisfying themselves that we were really alone, it seemed that they felt themselves so much a part of the forest and of all the living things in it that they had no need to fear anything except that which was not of the forest. One of them said to me, later, "When we are the Children of the Forest, what need have we to be afraid of it? We are only afraid of that which is outside the forest."

We stood there, water from the stream still running down our legs, until they were satisfied that all was well. Then Makubasi nodded to Madyadya and to another boy. They ran on ahead, and after a whispered discussion two others followed. The rest of us walked slowly on until we came to a small clearing nearby, the far side of which was only just visible as the last glimmer of daylight dwindled away into blackness. We stood there waiting, saying nothing. Ausu and

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ceremonies of the local Negro tribes, nor did it follow any prescribed ritualistic details beyond a general over-all pattern. It was plain that the molimo trumpets were not considered as highly sacred objects in themselves; what was important, for some reason, was the sound they produced. It was also very clear that the people of the forest wanted to be quite sure that the village world was well sealed off, because before the men gathered together that evening I found that the path leading out of the camp toward the village had been closed. A fallen branch and some logs had been dragged across it, shutting out the profane outside world.

The molimo of the Pygmies is not concerned with ritual or magic. In fact, it is so devoid of ritual, expressed either in action or words, that it is difficult to see what it *is* concerned with. Every day, around midday, a couple of youths would go around the camp, just as they had done this day, collecting offerings of food and firewood from hut to hut, for the molimo concerns everyone, and everyone must contribute. And each evening the women and children shut themselves up in their huts after the evening meal, for the molimo is mainly the concern of the men. And when the women have retired the men sit around the kumamolimo—the hearth of the molimo—and gaze into the molimo fire. Nearby a basket hangs, full of the offerings of food that will be eaten later. But first the men must sing, for this is the real work of the molimo, as they say; to eat and to sing, to eat and to sing. Yet behind these apparently simple outer trappings of the festival there was an atmosphere of almost overwhelming expectancy.

That first night, after I had eaten my meal, I went over to the molimo fire, halfway between Manyalibo's hut and that of his daughter Kondabate and her husband Ausu, where the men were already gathering. I noticed that Amabosu, the singer, was not there. I knew why when, a few minutes after the singing had begun, I heard the voice of the molimo answering, way off by itself in the forest. It

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115 But, most important, he told me, or rather
778 showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest.
182 "The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a
181 father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going
[136] wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not
[533] looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

115 All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly
778 that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the
776 nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and
781 their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did
182 so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

[i.e. Moke - analyst]

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much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to understand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

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The women can throw in their opinions, particularly if they know that the area the men have selected is barren of vegetable foods. But the men usually know this anyway.

If the question is one of marriage, and a father announces that he does not like the girl his son has chosen, his son can call on all his friends to help him. If he is strong and holds out, the whole group will be assembled to discuss the case. If they agree with the father, then either the boy has to give up his talk of matrimony or else make up his mind to marry the girl anyway. In the latter case he would probably go and live with her hunting group. But it is seldom that things come to such a pass.

In fact, Pygmies dislike and avoid personal authority, though they are by no means devoid of a sense of responsibility. It is rather that they think of responsibility as communal. If you ask a father, or a husband, why he allows his son to flirt with a married girl, or his wife to flirt with other men, he will answer, "It is not my affair," and he is right. It is *their* affair, and the affair of the other men and women, and of their brothers and sisters. He will try to settle it himself, either by argument or by a good beating, but if this fails he brings everyone else into the dispute so that he is absolved of personal responsibility.

If you ask a Pygmy why his people have no chiefs, no lawgivers, no councils, or no leaders, he will answer with misleading simplicity, "Because we are the people of the forest." The forest, the great provider, is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the lawgiver, the leader, and the final arbitrator.

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MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH But at the central fireplace there was always a basket of food, showing that it was a kumamolimo, the only outward indication that the God of the Forest had been invoked and was waiting silently nearby, in the trees or in the Lelo itself, ready to enter the camp at night and join his people in their songs of joy and praise. The casual observer might have thought the youngsters were playing a game when they went around from hut to hut with a fishing line and a basket, collecting food from everyone. There was certainly nothing about their demeanor to indicate that this was an essential part of a great act of communion. And if the same observer were told that this was so, he would probably form the opinion that the molimo, whatever it was, could not mean very much if it was treated so lightly and casually.

This, in fact, is the opinion of the villagers. For them the ritual act is the important thing. In their religious rites it is the correct performance of the ceremonial that counts most. If correctly performed it is bound to bring the desired results, regardless of the accompanying thought, if indeed there is any. All attention is focused on the act itself. And it must not only be performed correctly, but with a solemnity that betrays fear.

The difference between the two attitudes is perhaps one of those fine shades of difference that divide magic from religion, though there is so much overlapping that they can seldom be divided in practice. Whereas the villagers believe that the act itself brings about results in a way they cannot explain, which is what we call magic, the BaMbuti do not believe this at all. They believe in a benevolent deity or supernatural power which they identify with the forest. To this they owe as much respect and affection and consideration as they owe to their own parents, and from it they can expect the same in return. So, for the Pygmies, it is not so much the act itself that counts, or the manner in which the act is performed, but the thought that goes with it. The collecting of food from hut to hut is not a

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on us all and disappeared into his hut. The molimo, surrounded by a triumphant entourage, now left the village, and we escorted it back to the forest. Dawn was breaking, streaking the sky with gold and crimson, and as soon as we had found a suitable temporary hiding place we returned to the village.

It was in a dreadful state of chaos. Black ashes and cinders covered the ground everywhere; manioc plants were uprooted, sugar cane trampled down, chairs smashed, leaves torn off roofs and the mud from many walls crumbled on the ground. The Negro villagers were full of complaints, but in the Pygmy village men and women were silent, sleepily clearing up the wreckage and preparing for the midday feast. Nobles and headmen began arriving from neighboring villages, and as even the four poles that represented the Pygmy baraza had been smashed to the ground, they took possession of my veranda. They had come to supervise the ritual feast which, according to their custom, marked the end of the mourning ceremonies for Balekimito. They were a little surprised to find that the elima occupied the house in which Balekimito had died, but the Pygmies were in no mood to argue. They just shrugged their shoulders and said it was a good house. As far as they were concerned they had finished mourning their personal loss as soon as their mother had been buried. From then onward they had been fulfilling their duty to the forest by rejoicing with the molimo for the long and good life that had been granted to the old lady. They had acknowledged the gift of the fire of life from the forest, and the forest's right and power to withdraw it; they had acknowledged and accepted the facts of life and death as both being, equally, the gift of their god.

But if the villagers wanted them to have a formal feast to end the mourning, and were willing to give the food, they did not object.

The food was cooked and laid out in the center of my veranda, which when the sun was high was the only cool and shady place in the village. This meant that the villagers were pushed to the edge as

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camp resounded to songs of joy and praise, accompanied by the ringing of the ngbengbe sticks as they were clapped together in complex cross rhythms by boys and girls alike. Every night Masisi told his group, which had steadily grown ever since the beginning, stories about the past. And every night we went to bed content, knowing that the morrow would be even better; for each day we discovered fresh growths of mushrooms, trees full of different kinds of nuts, and each night the chameleon gave its long, sad cry, to tell us that on the morrow we would have more honey.

One night in particular will always live for me, because that night I think I learned just how far away we civilized human beings have drifted from reality. The moon was full, so the dancing had gone on for longer than usual. Just before going to sleep I was standing outside my hut when I heard a curious noise from the nearby children's bopi. This surprised me, because at nighttime the Pygmies generally never set foot outside the main camp. I wandered over to see what it was.

There, in the tiny clearing, splashed with silver, was the sophisticated Kenge, clad in bark cloth, adorned with leaves, with a flower stuck in his hair. He was all alone, dancing around and singing softly to himself as he gazed up at the treetops.

Now Kenge was the biggest flirt for miles, so, after watching a while, I came into the clearing and asked, jokingly, why he was dancing alone. He stopped, turned slowly around and looked at me as though I was the biggest fool he had ever seen; and he was plainly surprised by my stupidity.

"But I'm *not* dancing alone," he said. "I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon." Then, with the utmost unconcern, he ignored me and continued his dance of love and life.

As the weeks went by, however, a note of dissatisfaction stirred in the camp. Masisi began to complain that the others, including Manyalibo, were way off to the north getting meat, yet they had

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or chirp of a cricket tells you that the forest is alive with some presence.

As I splashed my way through the last stream and climbed to the top of the rise above Apa Lelo, the sounds of the forest grew louder. This was a friendly sign, but somehow it made me feel even more lonely. Then I came down into the old camp. The huts were rotted and collapsed, the clearing overgrown. As I roamed about, tracing where huts had been and remembering who had lived there, kicking idly with my feet in the hopes of finding some familiar object, it all began to live again. I wandered down to the Lelo, as calm and placid and beautiful as ever, and I thought of the molimo. As I looked into the waters where the trumpet had once been hidden, it was as if I heard its voice in the distance, gentle but insistent.

When I had bade my farewell to that very special river and returned to the camp, I saw it as it really was in the timelessness of the forest world—the huts strong and green, the fires burning brightly, and the air heavy with the scent of cooking. Lizabeti was running about with the other children, swinging happily on her crutches. The men helped one another to examine and repair their nets, while the women cooked and gossiped. Masisi was shouting at someone, and Manyalibo was trying to pacify him in his usual gruff, good-natured way. Old Moke sat back in his chair and puffed at his pipe, gazing up at the tree tops so very high above. I heard him murmur once more, "You will see things you have never seen before. . . . You will understand why we are called People of the Forest. . . . When the Forest dies, we shall die." And for the last time I heard the chorus of that great song of praise: "If Darkness *is*, Darkness is Good."

The camp and the people disappeared, leaving only a shimmering haze over Apa Lelo, but the song remained, for the song is the soul of the people and the soul of the forest. The molimo trumpet, now